

Audio Transference

On the Double Aught

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The weather that day was purr-err-errrfect. Disco science balls were sweatin' everything was chug nice, the beach was half empty, the sun was out and hot and spicy and made everyone look good, feel good. I sat. I was. I still am, I think, but not like then, that day, that sun, those waves, I was there and, in many ways, I still am. This Don Jimeno, big fella, fat like a small single seat couch. He brings himself up to me and smiles, says something, and for me, I was there, the waves... those waves, there is nothing in a wave, inside I mean, nothing, just air, a funnel, a tunnel, empty, and I saw them, those waves, that day and this guy, this don, jabbing at me, jabbing, until I look at him and on his sunglasses I could see the waves behind me, even clearer, I could see a part of the curl and there it was, or there they were. Still, he lingers, I guess I must have said something because he kept talking and motioning with his hands, glinting in arcs with his gold watch, expansive movements, fat but fast is Don Jimeno. He just stumbles from one topic to the next, rolls, and bobs his head which moves the waves and sometimes they are curling and then they're gone, all is flat and he's still talking and spitting now because of his cigar, which he just bites in to mid-sentence, hand with gold watch digs in shorts (how tight are they?), and fishes gold lighter, Don Jimeno moves in deep circles, so I gather, he pauses, sniffs, puffs and looks at me. And his eyes are two waves moving simultaneously, swirling where his eyeballs should be. Furthermore, with his silence the waves have regained their essential crash, I turn to them giving Don Jimeno the back of my head to admire. I turn to the waves and their movement, the swirl they make as they live and to the tide as they die and slide back into the immensity from which they came. He trusts the cigar on my chest, here, he says, I normally don't smoke but this weather, these waves, that ripe, that curl. Don Jimeno insists. I partake. To my coughing surprise it's no cigar this rolled up delight, we ping-ponged that mother at eight in the A.M. till the scattered ashes and the acrid taste in our mouths was all that was left.

Coming on to the good old lunch hour I have the begging's of a headache, Jimeno scoffs at my provinciality 'that's what coffee is for', says he in a straight whinny voice. Oddly enough since we

finished smoking the good herb his speech has become more intelligible and also the weather has smoothed out like velvet into a short steady rainy yet sunny shade of existence. Lunch was a chicken affair served with french-fries and the tiniest salad ever to complete a dish. A one course meal swooped up and devoured in less than a fraction of the time it took to cook and serve. I sat watching Jimeno limp over his food, he took off his sunglasses, without them he looked parched, soggy, I had to stretch a hand to touch him, fearing he was going to break loose and water all over this nice floor. As soon as my fingers reached his sweat drenched shirt he squirmed up at me, 'look at me queer' he said, or did his teeth stay clenched? His nose was below his underlip, the folds of his neck wafted like the palm trees lining the avenue outside. The vowels of his name formed in my mouth but only bubbles of pinkish hue came out of my throat accompanied by a groaning sound: '*vvat dydh wiii smoku?*' he glares back, I wish he would put on his sunglasses (I miss being able to see what is going on behind me when I talk to you) his eyes are watery small and red. 'Your coffee, gentlemen' interrupts the waiter, he picks the remnants of our lunch and sets two cups steaming in front of us. By the time the coffee has been imbibed things have settled down some, Jimeno's face is still full swing but his eyes have mercifully stayed put. 'Every time I've gone in for philanthropy it's been a fiasco, listen to me, it's like I go out punching people in the street...' and it comes out, it bounces out in short jerks of his gold-watched wrist until it refills my memory. Of course, Don Jimeno, we took that boat ride together two days ago, yes, I remember you, I made the mistake of giving him one of my cards and now he sits there across from me, with the beautiful sunglasses in his hand, and his eyes giving me the treatment. He needs a man like myself that can handle things, certain things going on in his warehouses, also, his house is a mess, something with the wife or the mistress, I can never tell which is which, until finally it all comes out like a cotton candy ball, fresh Jimeno, lunch did wonders to your complexion my fat friend but I'm afraid, most respectfully so, that I'm on my vacation. More coffee, please. And he uses the phrase: 'name your price', with a lisp on the *p* that made it sound like rice, and then I get all confused again, I feel like asking, 'didn't we have lunch?' and by his reaction I think I must have said it out loud because his left hand has let go of the sunglasses and has gone to his eyes and he's rubbing like he might cry – hopefully not, but he turns to the waiter and asks for the check. His eyes are clear, and now I know he's got me, I'm down deep with this *don*. 'Tell me', I say, and my story could very much end right there only he is hopeful now, so he begins to spew.

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I would say we moved in *Equity*, not from different directions or anything like that, more like we're all part of this gigantic moving thing-*entity* (entity-equity, *get it?*) imagine a vast ocean peppered with different types and kinds of boats that are all supposed to work proper skiff, not only against the natural elements but against other boats, yes?

My boss, *armpit joe* for the record, he kept a cellphone wrapped in tinfoil deep inside this specially designed lead-walled safe he had in a corner of his office. He showed it to me after I'd been a year in the office, he made a whole show of it too, closing the curtains, locking the door –I thought for a moment he was going to make at pass at me– but then he was on his hands and knees next to the safe turning that small black dial. We used the cellphone (an old lid situation, with actual buttons) to call one– ...other boats– out there in this vast equity ocean. You'd turn it on and then when you'd used it you made sure it was turned off, well wrapped in its grey wrinkled wrapper, and you left it back inside the safe.

Yeah, totally. I'd never forget. When it got to a point when no one was speaking with no one else above water level, –you could actually spot the journalists by their clothes– they had us all surveilled, is that even a word? Connections, broadbands, phones, office & personal where being monitored, we knew this, come on... we run the economy, everybody else is just jogging behind, okay? That clear enough for you?

...the year of the freeze, you know... *that* year. We went from having to use the cellphone in tinfoil a couple times a month, at most twice in a week –if there was a lot of traffic, or trouble in a distant country with backdoor deals cropping up... anything we didn't want above water level we used Armpit's phone. But that year– that f...ing year– we had it on every day. Every. Day. Still had to turn it on turn it off when we used it.

We turned it on one morning, a Saturday, Armpit and me locked inside his office, just the two of us in the whole office, and there is this voice message from the night before on the phone. This had never happened before, no one ever left voice messages, we didn't even know our phone could do that. We'd get your regular txt messages from time to time– with a new number, a send and destroy type situation, we'd learn the number, punch it in and erase the message. It was a deep *deep* trust situation this. We never left or got voice messages. That was unheard of, both literally

and scientifically speaking. The message was full static, iron jungle noises, nothing –*you know?*– but the number... where had I seen it before? It got me thinking, and no, I can't tell you that, *Armpit* is still operating in uncharted waters, I might sink him if I told you, but, back then, I asked his permission to take note of the number and go through all my contacts because it looked familiar. Armpit trusted me, we got along, not friendly-like, strictly business between us, but we could still relax around one another and not be in –like a– constant state of. Expectancy.

It turned out to be –yeah, you know already... Lewis. Fucking big L [*does hand gesture with extended forefinger and protruding thumb over his forehead*] Lewis.

It could've cost me my job, my premium... fucking Lewis garden... and he was one of the careful ones too. I could easily imagine him with a tinfoil wrapped cellphone of his own, using it without taking it out of the tinfoil, like takeaway lunch. Maybe locked in a bathroom, definitely not doing the whole getting cell phone out of hiding place, unwrapping, turning on and dialing from the floor of *his* office. Our situation was vastly improved, I would carefully say that Armpit's secretary knew, I say this openly because she died not too long ago, so no harm there. She was on *it*, she stopped every little thing that tried to get in that office while we used the lid and actual antenna phone. She would even unplug the router, don't know why she did that... but proves to effects that she was aware somehow of our dealings in Armpit's office. Lewis on the other hand was junior dick to some Samurai over at Ass & Bass who knew numbers by instinct, was what Lewis said, but it always reeked of drug money, a certain whiff of limitless profit. Lewis traded above water for them, to wash out the shark blood from the stone bills –I guess, I never spoke to Lewis of his employment situation, it would have been too personal for our range of conversations. He was from a loop made by Mr. T and the small guy, Mr. T you know, so yeah. I knew him to be able to move amounts covert and dirty over covert and dirty parts of the world... everybody needs money. But, this is important to know– that, the kind of guy Lewis is, he could easily get trapped in a situation where your normal 99% of the population would easily walk out of, Lewis, on the other hand (representing the cemented idiocy of the 0.1%) would scream for desperate help. He was pantomime, not juices-like, but... it's like something I've come to notice in male heterosexuals that have to contend with growing up next to an older sister. I can't even begin–

Gastronomic. Yep. That's what I would term it. Because... now –*you see?* he was calling our specially hid tinfoil wrapped cellphone, that we kept in a specially designed safe to avoid all possible traces, during a very delicate time in *equity* vastness ... an absolutely essential piece of equipment for ensuing the continued functioning of our operations... and here was Lewis, sort of casually drunk dialing, this secret number, from his own personal phone! That's why I recognized the caller in the first place. I mean, I'm not telling you much you haven't deduced for yourself by now by telling you that we kept the phone's data bank empty, no numbers, no contacts, all messages were read and deleted *tout de fucking suite*. Shakes your boat, don't it? And here he is, Lewis the small-one-single-balled-dick calling us on a Friday night. What did he do? Did he memorize the number? that no good, did he... by any means take down the number? sticky note or whatever – that no good no neither. When you use certain channels of information you respect the instruction manual. And this was a total breach of all unestablished, maybe I should make it explicit and say: silent, protocols.

And let me gently remind you this was the year of the freeze. All the other players out there weren't feeling the gelid conditions of top of the ocean sailing because everyone had suddenly gone submarine on us, and our outfit, as we stood back then, could not stand to lose the above sea level traffic with an added expense of acquiring submarine capabilities. I'm I pushing it too far though? With the analogy? In plain terms...? that any lame public transportation user, your regular joe-jane, afro or cropped hair wearing humanoid creature could understand? Well... let's see: if, say, government expenditure goes beyond a certain level, like, we have an unexpected war, or a devastating natural disaster obliterates part of the country, a lot of funds have to be tapped into in order to get things steady again, well, in those cases, money trafficking is all put on a single direction, like they recall all the boats to one single port. And to avoid scamming and/or enemy hacking, consulting is only permitted on a national level, so when any other regular run o' de' mill day we could speculate with China Hong Kong the Japs, the Jews, the Poles, the entire world... during a freeze all these communications are jammed cut frowned upon and otherwise completely forbidden. So, yeah –*now, you see?*– we needed our tinfoil wrapped gadget to remain untraced, unknown, and out of reach from all prying ears.

Armpit? He looked at me, waited for me to shift through my contacts, by then we had done our round of secret calls and had turned it off. He was sitting on the sofa he had just closed while I was sitting on his office sofa going through my cellphone. I showed it to him, once I found who the number belonged to, he didn't know Lewis but he knew his sister. You see what I'm saying here? It's probable that, like, any guy you meet is liable to ask you: hey aren't you (whatever Lewis' sister is named) kid brother? I felt for the guy, I really did, not only does he have to deal with any mother issues that might crop up as his sexuality is developing but in the room right next to his, a wall's thickness away, is this blossoming flower taking daily showers, trying on different clothes, sleeping in her underwear... –I mean– that's got to be tough. And–and by what Armpit told me back then, *she*, Lewis' sister, was pretty sex. Imagine that... but no matter his personality or banality issues, Lewis had no business calling our secret gadget in the middle of no night. Much less leaving a cryptic, butt dialed-like message, I mean, come on! we got to at least maintain a professional semblance here. This aint monopoly with grandma.

Armpit just said to me, solemn-like: call him. Follow it up. But be careful. That last bit hurt, because he was sort of telling me to deal with it, and that implicitly, if things got pumpkin sour south, the whole setup would be placed on my shoulders, the blame that is, because Lewis (this gigantic pimple walking the face of the earth), was supposed to be my friend, or at least I knew him to hang out with and that made us liable to be confederates in whatever tinfoil wrapped cellphone exchanges we were to be, supposedly, involved in. Which burned, you know? I mean– I loved that fucking office; it was *the* place for me. As comfortable as your dad's couch it was for me there. And, it also put me in an awkward spot–

Because...I couldn't just call him and ask him through my own p.p. (personal phone) that would put both of us in jeopardy, if somehow his own end of the call was monitored or traced somehow (how the fuck should I know how?) I couldn't just give them, whoever they were (and again, how could I know this?) – by giving my, over and out, on my end. As far as I could call it, they didn't know what end was *my end*. You see? Do you get me here? Do you follow my logic here? This is where paycheck's worth comes into play. He called us–right?– they had him, if *they* exist –they had him, but, from our side, we didn't pick up, so, they don't have us, yet. Our end was safe and would remain safe as long as we didn't acknowledge his having called us. Are you getting all this?

It's like one of those he knows we know he knows situations. Very slippery floor to be maneuvering on. And all of this because of his ill-advised use of his own (fucking!) personal number. I mean, we were going to appear on his monthly phone bill for christsakes. Well, you're more likely to be untraceable if you're listed. You can easily hide in the lists. It's too fancy, in of itself, to go deep dark black market invisible, oddly enough it gets too much attention. And for that single tweak, it's not worth it.

Trace the tracers, man, don't look at me. I've held ships afloat by stopping bullet-size leaking holes with my bare feet.

He floated. What you would call pocket money. In the big thousands. Lewis was a shrewd rat, he couldn't see a nickel in the gutter without having liver pangs over an unturned profit worth a bill. Century he was good with, and his fluency in mandarin had got him places we can't even begin to speculate about. Deep deep all the colors in the alphabet market shizzle.

I went to this place I know of, and got to use this janitor's phone some fifty blocks south deep in the wrong side of town. Fifty-two minutes, it took me, fifty-two minutes to get there. I had his number on a piece of paper, I learned it by heart and ate it afterwards. I didn't take my p.p. you see? I left it on loop at the office I waited fifteen minutes, gave him a two ring and then I would hang up. Two rings, hang up. Too gangster? Live with it. Powers that be are broke, breaking, breakers, all kinds. I'm no good in grey. He picked up, half an hour later. I say: sushi please call me. We hang up. It takes him another twelve minutes or so to ding me back. I paid him, I paid him sixty bills to watch by the door, he didn't even count the money—passed me a stool and leaned against the wall. Some people don't care, I can respect that, don't mean I understand, but I dig, you know?

Look, you gotta get cross eyed here about this whole Lewis thing. It was worth it. We aren't playing snowball marry with all the girls in some parlor rolling joints by the fire. I would freeze, joe, you know? with the armpit, he could flow. I told him it was Lewis, he gave me the: what dah fuck is he thinking look, and then gave me the deal with it look. We outfit, but we're not going to club someone for a silly pass, we accept mistakes, ship handling is a trust machine, you deliver trust from order to action. I trusted Lewis, I trusted he'd done what he'd done (phone our office ultra-secret number from his own personal phone!) because of some lapse of memory, or some

misguided effort on his part at being funny, anything man, I clutched at any possibility. It could be, and this was the only hope I held on to, dearly, that he wanted to pass on to us some shiny bit of buiz, everything else being frozen pond, we could all use the flex of cash. Who doesn't? Who wouldn't?

But he was all casual-like when he called, the little fuck. He was all: hi! Hi? Hi... what is wrong with this guy? Here I was after a fifty-two-minute drive, another half-hour finding him and he's giving me a hi? Hi? What is this?