

The People of the Paparazzi

by Michael Olsen

Characters: PAUL DIMATIO / ROBERT BASTONIO, an actor, 23 (M)

CLARE TIGERON / MISSY STONETHORPE, an actor, 28, (F)

DAMIEN, a film director, 34 (M)

Genre: Comedy

Running Time: 30 minutes

Lights come up on a non-descript hotel room somewhere in west Hollywood. There is a door, a window with a closed curtain, a door to the bedroom, plus a sideboard with a number of minibar drinks on it, along with a large bowl of fruit. Centrestage there is a coffee table.

Suddenly CLARE and PAUL fall into the room through the door. There is a cacophony of flashes from photographer's bulbs behind them.

Paul closes the door. Paul and Clare are laughing. Paul carries a satchel over his shoulder, while Clare has a large handbag.

CLARE: Do you think we did it?

PAUL: Of course.

Clare goes to the window. Clare peeks out the side of the curtain, and again, the flashbulbs go off.

PAUL: I think that's enough.

CLARE: I just want to make sure, that's all.

PAUL: We just have to follow the list.

Paul pulls out a piece of paper and consults it.

CLARE: We've done nearly everything.

PAUL: *(reading)* Sideswipe a car, order two hazelnut dairy whips from Mr Dairy— why hazelnut?

CLARE: Who knows?

PAUL: Um, get a speeding ticket in the Canyon—

CLARE: That was easy.

PAUL: And now—

CLARE: And now tonight.

PAUL: Twitter and Facebook

CLARE: And that's it.

PAUL: That's it. Can we go after that?

CLARE: I suppose. We only have to stay long enough to make them think we—you know. OK?

PAUL: Yes yes. Let's get on with it.

CLARE: Yes, let's.

Paul goes over to the coffee table and gets out a laptop computer from the satchel and proceeds to log on to Twitter and Facebook.

CLARE: Are you angry at me?

PAUL: Of course not. We just have to stay on script, that's all.

CLARE: The holiest of holies: the script.

PAUL: If we don't—

CLARE: If we don't we might actually have some fun.

Paul sighs. Clare comes over and reads over his shoulder.

PAUL: I'm just checking out Twitter.

CLARE: Even Perez?

PAUL: There's nothing there.

CLARE: There's nothing in any of them.

PAUL: Things have only just happened in the last couple of hours. It might take some time.

CLARE: Not this long. This is Twitter. You fart and someone knows about it 30 seconds later in Peking.

PAUL: We're following the script. I'm sure my agent knows what he's doing.

CLARE: Who cares? It was fun. I liked it when that cop pulled us over for speeding. Did you know I flashed him? He didn't skip a beat. I guess he has starlets flashing him all the time. (Pause) We both needed to get the hell out of there.

I can't stand that Jerry's always bossing us around like we don't know what the hell we're doing or where to stand.

PAUL: If there's anything I know about making movies, it's that no-one knows what the hell they're doing.

CLARE: That's true. Did you see his last one, that knight in shining armour thing called—

PAUL: *Knight In Shining Armour.*

CLARE: That's the one. It totally tanked. Didn't even make 10 million in its first weekend.

PAUL: Unlike your *Sweet Caroline*.

CLARE: 60 million opening weekend thank you very much. Kerching kerching. *(in rich southern accent)* "Why Mr Jones I do believe you are innarested in me."

PAUL: *(in rich southern accent)* "Any man who's not ain't got blood in his veins."

CLARE: *(in rich southern accent)* "Mr Jones, I do believe I—I love you."

PAUL: I know.

CLARE: That's not what he says!

PAUL: Blame Harrison Ford.

CLARE: Harrison Ford? What are you talking about?

PAUL: *The Empire Strikes Back?* When Princess Leia tells Han Solo that she loves him? It was Harrison Ford who said, "I know" instead of the written line, "I love you too."

CLARE: Our *Mirror of Truth* is not *The Empire Strikes Back*.

PAUL: I know. I know.

CLARE: No-one goes and does impro in a 70 million dollar film.

PAUL: And that's the problem with films today, and why we're going through this charade. No-one knows if our film is going to make any money at all, so any publicity is better than none at all.

Pause

CLARE: You don't think much of it, do you?

PAUL: *Mirror of Truth?* It's a dog. No-one's going to believe that I would race around the world to find you just because you smiled at me.

- CLARE:** You might.
- PAUL:** Not in the real world.
- CLARE:** This is not the real world. This is the movies. It's your job to make it believable.
- PAUL:** No offense, but do you really think you're that hot that my character would leave his job, his gorgeous girlfriend, everything he knows and feels a part of, and fly half-way around the world just to see you again? I suppose it's every girl's fantasy, isn't it? We just fall at your feet, breathless in the presence of your overwhelming beauty. Well believe me there's only so much I can do.
- CLARE:** So why are you doing it at all?
- PAUL:** My agent thought it would be good. Extend my range. He said you can't keep playing vampires and amnesiac assassins for the rest of your life.
- CLARE:** You're only 23.
- PAUL:** Old in Hollywood speak.
- Clare looks away.*
- PAUL:** Why are you doing it?
- CLARE:** Damien. He's a friend of mine from way back. I'm doing it as a favour to him. He said that he would only be able to get the money for the film if I was in it.
- PAUL:** *Sweet Caroline.*
- CLARE:** You're only as good as your last film, and that was mine: ultimately 125 million domestic, 145 million foreign sales, and now perhaps 20 million domestic on cable and DVD.
- PAUL:** Pretty impressive if I do say so myself.
- CLARE:** It's just numbers, that's all. Do I see any of that? Just what I signed up for, no percentage of the gross. I'm never going to do that again.
- PAUL:** Numbers numbers numbers. We all live by them, don't we?
- CLARE:** What do you mean?
- PAUL:** Like ...47.
- CLARE:** 47?
- PAUL:** The number of final breaths my father took after he fell down the stairs drunk and fractured his skull.
- CLARE:** I thought your father died of a heart attack.

PAUL: That's what my agent changed it to. He thought dying drunk falling down the stairs wasn't very glamourours.

Clare shakes her head.

PAUL: If I'm the only one who knows the truth, does that mean it didn't happen?

CLARE: It means you care, doesn't it?

PAUL: But does it matter?

CLARE: Of course it matters. He was your father. You only ever have one of those in your life.

PAUL: I suppose so. Why is it in this game your life starts feeling like you didn't live it?

CLARE: It's because you're telling other peoples' stories, never your own. Real stories happen in greasy burger joints with waitresses who look like beauty-queen rejects, with food to match and flat beer to wash it all down with. You know what your problem is?

PAUL: What?

CLARE: You can't believe how lucky you are. You think it's happening to someone else.

PAUL: And you?

CLARE: I know it's all happening to me, but if it all ended tomorrow I'd still be happy. You'd be lost. *(Pause)* OK. What about...22.

PAUL: What's that?

CLARE: The number of the drug and rehab clinic I went to last time in Beverley Hills.

PAUL: That was last year. I read about it at showbiz.com. It sounded pretty swish.

CLARE: Really?

PAUL: What was it like?

CLARE: I didn't like the food—what there was of it. They put me on a detox diet. Some Himalayan grass juice and prairie bread, to cleanse the body and the soul. I hated it, but my agent wanted me to stick to it. There was one really lovely guy, Dan, he was the cleaner. He used to sneak in some food for me: a Big Mac, a McFlurry. It's only when you're starving that McDonalds tastes so good.

PAUL: What happened to him?

CLARE: He sold his story to It Magazine for \$150,000.

PAUL: That's awful.

CLARE: How much would you sell our story for?

PAUL: *(smiling)* More than \$150,000. *(Pause)* What about...7.

CLARE: Seven?

PAUL: The number of guys the producers saw before picking me.

CLARE: OK. Four. The number of make-up and costume artists who attend on me every movie I make.

Clare smiles.

CLARE: Now, the mini bar.

Clare goes over to the drinks and grabs a large glass and starts pouring the little bottles of drink into the large glass.

PAUL: What are you doing?

CLARE: This is a trick that Tabitha taught me.

PAUL: Tabitha?

CLARE: Tabitha Clarkson. You know, the country and western singer. You do know who Tabitha Clarkson is, surely.

PAUL: Tabitha Clarkson? My god, she's fantastic. She's the only country and western singer I actually like.

CLARE: She was in the clinic with me. We had a little concert the night before I left. She has got the most fabulous voice. Anyway, this is how you get rid of the mini bar in one hit, but you have to put in the Secret Ingredient.

PAUL: And what's that?

Clare holds up two lemons from the fruit bowl.

PAUL: Lemons?

CLARE: They hide the clash of the different drinks.

Clare slices the lemon, but cuts her hand. The lemon stings like crazy.

CLARE: Oh shit! Shit shit shit shit shit!

Paul grabs Clare's hand and sucks on her cut, drawing away the lemon.

CLARE: Thanks. Thanks, that's...It's OK. You can stop now. Paul.
She draws her hand away, but only after Paul has kissed it before releasing it.

PAUL: Here. Put this on.
Paul takes out a band aid and puts it over Clare's cut.

CLARE: You're a regular boy scout you know that?
Clare flexes her hand.

CLARE: That's the first time.

PAUL: The first time what?

CLARE: The first time I felt—you know—like you were—I don't know—interested?

PAUL: I'm not.

CLARE: Well you need to do that in the film.

PAUL: I know.

CLARE: Even if you don't. Are you going to kiss me like that in the last scene?

PAUL: Do you want me to?

CLARE: You need to. Otherwise it won't work.

PAUL: You deserve to be kissed like that every day.

CLARE: OK.

PAUL: I mean it.

CLARE: OK. *(Pause)* Time's getting away. We have—we have work to do.
Paul consults the list again.

PAUL: Twitter.

CLARE: Right.
Clare sits down at the computer.

PAUL: Just write that you're having the time of your life with your co-star.

CLARE: As if.
Paul laughs.

PAUL: How about: "need to retreat because the film is so demanding emotionally."

CLARE: That sounds good.

Clare types that into her Twitter account.

PAUL: Now my turn.

Clare moves aside for Paul.

PAUL: We have to put something in so people will put two-and-two together. That's what my manager wants.

CLARE: How about, "Clare Tigeron is hot." That's pretty much it.

PAUL: Got it!

Paul types in his Twitter account.

CLARE: *(reading)* "Taking a break from filming Mirror of Truth, have some work to do with Clare Tigeron on certain parts."

Clare laughs.

CLARE: "Certain parts." I love that. So what do we do now?