

Bad Hair Day
by
Elliot Willson

© Elliot Willson 10th March 2008

Registration #: 812277

e-mail: elliott@morelamb.com

FADE IN:

MAIN TITLES

over a TRACKING SHOT of various PHOTOGRAPHS, MAGAZINE COVERS and NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, faded, well-fingered and wilting. They feature the same young, vivacious woman, LAURA SHAYE.

Most are of her on a CATWALK or some GLAMOROUS LOCALE, she's clearly a MODEL. It's 15 years ago, a time of Big Hair and even Bigger Shoulder Pads, and what the model wears here would result in her being incarcerated without trial today.

We float over a Vogue cover which shows a beaming, deeply tanned Laura, headlined "VIVA LA LOBSTA". A New York Post front page shows Laura on the arm of WARREN BEATTY.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK SCREEN WITH WHITE TEXT

"8:59am"

EXT. HEATHROW - CARGO WAREHOUSE - PRESENT DAY

A vintage sports coupé, fighting a losing battle against rust, pulls up outside the building. Bananarama's *Venus* rattles the interior.

I/E SPORTS CAR - DAY

A fortysomething woman - Laura. Older, paler, querulous, and like the vehicle, fighting to keep it all together.

She pouts furiously as she slips on her Jackie Os. Noticing a blemish to her make-up, her hand gropes instinctively for something on the backseat that should be there, but isn't.

The aging bombshell shakes her head and grabs an envelope, slips from the car, tottering on high heels as she makes towards the building.

EXT. HEATHROW - LONG TERM PARKING LOT - DAY

SAMANTHA BLAIN crouches inspecting her watch, tugging impatiently at perimeter fencing. Behind the proud veneer and sharp intelligent eyes a young boyish female, who like a stray, damaged dog, hasn't seen much love or attention in her eighteen years.

She glances at her watch again, as suddenly the ground begins to RUMBLE. It's a 747 cargo conversion leaving a maintenance hanger. As the huge airliner passes, the BOOM of its ENGINES have a devastating effect. Behind Sam, a sea of cars, dozens of ALARMS go off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON A HUT NEARBY where a chunky SECURITY GUARD emerges, grimacing at this chorus of electronic laughing hyenas. He spots the airliner. Dismayed, he disappears back inside.

Sam is already next to a Porsche, smashing the window with a small hammer and slipping inside. She's expertly forcing the alarm panel within seconds - snipping a wire here and there.

Every ALARM resets and falls SILENT around her. She begins to smash at the steering lock and ignition switch.

INT. HEATHROW - ARRIVALS HALL - DAY

Typical airport stuff. A sixtysomething ultralumpen woman, MARGARET PRESTON, watches the customs exit, her demeanor as contained as her immaculately coiffured hairstyle.

She cranes to get a better view, brushing against BRENDA - svelte, fashionably dressed, her arms weighed down by Tiffany jewellery - definitely a lady who lunches.

BRENDA

Margaret, what a pleasant surprise.

MARGARET

Brenda.

BRENDA

It isn't like you to meet Edward - you're normally busy baking sponges.

MARGARET

Did you get the invitation?

BRENDA

To your home remedies bash?

(Margaret nods)

Sorry darling. I know you and your Good Housekeeping pals would love to indoctrinate me, but I'm far too busy - there's always one of Frederick's credit cards to max out. So what's so unusual about today?

MARGARET

It's our thirtieth wedding anniversary. Didn't Edward mention it to Frederick?

Brenda draws on her best acting skills to remain diplomatic.

BRENDA

Well now you come to mention it, I think he did say something.

Both women continue to scan distant figures.

INT. HEATHROW - CARGO DEPOT - DAY

Laura approaches a counter manned by a cheerful young STOREMAN, sliding him a piece of paper. A beat; as he stares at Laura, a look of recognition forming. She pulls off the glasses, ready to receive her public.

STOREMAN

Didn't you used to be Laura Shaye?

Her freshly formed smile evaporates.

LAURA

I still am.

STOREMAN

When I was a kid I swiped that poster from me old man's workshop, you know, the one where you're walking across the tennis court scratching your arse.

LAURA

That wasn't me.

STOREMAN

I loved that poster. Even though he beat the shit out of me when I found I took it. But it was worth it - it saw some real action...

LAURA

(interrupting)

It wasn't...

STOREMAN

...Won't be a second.

LAURA

(giving up)

I'm glad you liked the poster.

He disappears out back as her mobile phone begins to warble.

INT. PARKED PORSCHE - DAY

Sam slides behind the driver's seat, but as she does, she knocks something. Suddenly, the ALARM is ringing again.

Shit! Frantic fingers are working, but the SCREECH continues. Sam spots the SECURITY GUARD emerge. She ducks down, grabs the panel and whacks it against the dashboard:

The ALARM gives a dying gargle and STOPS. Sam slowly sits up to see the SECURITY GUARD peering at her, chuckling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She rams a SCREWDRIVER into the ignition - the Porsche starts up and speeds off in a SCREECH of burning rubber, boldly swerving around parked cars, heading towards the main gate.

She glances into the rear view mirror and giggles at the sight of the rotund GUARD panting in hot pursuit.

SAM

Who's laughing now, lard butt!

Sam's eyes are back on the exit gate seeing the FLASH of a CAR crossing in front of her. She brakes, but... CRUNCH!

INT. PORSCHE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sam beats down the air bag, checks herself over. Her relieved, smirking face freezes. SAM'S POV: two vigilant COPS waving to her from the POLICE CAR she's crashed into.

INT. HEATHROW - ARRIVALS HALL - DAY

Two BUSINESSMEN emerge from Customs. Our focus is on the taller, EDWARD PRESTON, where age and genetics have worked well together to leave a handsome man, despite his 60 years.

He's beaming - the overseas corporate battle against men half his age has been successful. Margaret's adoring eyes recognize her husband, she CALLS to him with a wave. But he's already taking a young waiting BLONDE into his arms.

ON MARGARET: benumbed, watching as the pair kiss - long parted lovers; EDWARD pinching the woman's derriere.

Brenda rushes forward to FREDERICK and they duck out.

Suddenly, Edward catches sight of Margaret. He whispers to BLONDIE and nudges her away, then approaches his wife with a look that says it all: We Need To Talk.

INT. HEATHROW - CARGO DEPOT - DAY

Laura's alone and on the mobile.

LAURA

Peggy, why didn't you tell the Lombardos people I only wash my hair in Evian?

PEGGY (V.O.)

(from phone)

Did you get the contact sheets?

The voice is older, more sapient, but struggling to be patient. Laura attacks the manila envelope.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA

All they could rustle up was some own brand crap from the local corner store. You have no idea what that stuff does to my hair.

She's pulled the sheets out. They're covered in a dozen black and white photographs. All CLEAVAGE shots.

LAURA

Is this Amateur Photographer Monthly? Where's my head?

An ominous beat.

PEGGY (V.O.)

Lombardos didn't want you for their make-up range. They didn't want your face.

LAURA

How could you do this to me?

PEGGY (V.O.)

I embellished a little to get you to do the gig. It's bread on the table. And there hasn't been much of that in the last few years.

LAURA

(detonating)

Peggy, I wanted that campaign!

The STOREMAN returns with a brown carton and a COLLEAGUE.

STOREMAN #1

Want me to check it before you sign?

LAURA

Whatever.

PEGGY (V.O.)

Hon, it's still a campaign - and I've been pulling strings, ropes and God knows what else to get it for you. It's their new bust rejuvenating lotion - it's one of those "before" and "after" things.

Relief all over the model's face: she's still hot. She jiggles her breasts triumphantly as if to back it up.

LAURA

Maybe this isn't a career low after all. So who's "before"? Don't tell me - got it - Joan Collins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STOREMAN #2 slices the box open, pulling out a PORCELAIN ELEPHANT. It's foul - gaudily painted and badly finished.

STOREMAN#2
Phew, he's a beast alright.

PEGGY (V.O.)
Laura, you're "before". Kate Moss is "after".

Storeman #2 holds out the elephant for inspection.

LAURA
(growing despondency)
Kate Moss, Kate Moss, Kate Moss!

Both Storemen exchange uneasy looks.

STOREMAN#1
(to Storeman #2, but quietly
indicating Laura)
Isn't that her daughter?

LAURA
(overhearing)
I am not Kate Moss' mother!
(into phone)
How could you do this to me, I hate you!

She hangs up. Takes a breath. Recovers. The man hands her the elephant, but Laura's oblivious. The model fumbles and it slips, tumbling to the floor where we hear it SHATTER.

LAURA
(holding up a freshly cracked
finger nail)
SHIT!

She glances at the men, their attention on the floor.

LAURA
Don't worry, I'm sure it's insured.

Laura's gaze drops and locks on the packet of WHITE, CRYSTALLINE POWDER lying among the shattered debris.

INT. HEATHROW - TERMINAL BUILDING - DAY

We watch from outside an EATERIE where EDWARD and MARGARET sit. We can't hear his words, but they wash over her.

A WAITRESS approaches and unloads refreshments. Margaret calmly pours the tea, adds milk - no sugar. She looks up, Edward's stopped talking, gesturing to a waitress for sugar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Edward never sees the teapot that swings towards him and cracks his head. He slumps forward.

ON MARGARET: as she puts the pot down, the waitress backing off, horrified. Margaret doesn't notice: she's taking sips of her tea, a Stepford wife who's short-circuited.

EXT. HEATHROW - POLICE STATION - LATER

A concrete eyesore on the outer fringes of the airport.

INT. CELL - DAY

A COP pushes a disoriented LAURA inside, where SAM and MARGARET sit, despondency swirling around them.

COP

Sorry it's double booked. We're quite popular at the moment - high season.

LAURA

This is all some terrible misunderstanding. If you would just let me call my boyfriend...

CLUNK! The policeman is gone. Laura sits between the two women. She eyes Sam, who's suddenly on her feet, pacing.

SAM

They can imprison a corpse - I'm not going back to jail. No fucking way.

Laura looks to Margaret, a heavy metal singer; hair deflated and her make-up run from crying. She's wringing her hands.

MARGARET

I killed him. I killed him.

A beat; as Laura considers the two women, then:

LAURA

Does anyone have a nail repair kit?