

READ O'BRIEN AND MARINE

Scene 3

(The edge of a palm grove near the beach. Beyond can be seen the beach, the bay, the open sea, and BALI HA'I. Stage right is BLOODY MARY'S kiosk. This is made of bamboo and canvas and is portable and collapsible. Her merchandise, laid out in front, comprises shells, native straw hats, local dress material, toy outrigger canoes and hookahs. Several grass skirts are hanging up around the kiosk. Stage left, at first making a puzzling silhouette, then as the lights come up, revealing itself to be a contraption of weird detail, is a G.I. homemade washing machine. It looks partly like a giant ice-cream freezer, partly like a windmill. In front of it there is a sign which reads:

*TWISTED AIR HAND LAUNDRY
LUTHER BILLIS ENTERPRISES
SPECIAL RATES FOR SEABEES.*

As the lights come up, the washing machine is being operated by Carpenter's Mate, Second Class, George Watts, better known as STEWPOT. SEABEES, SAILORS, MARINES and some ARMY MEN lounge around the scene waiting for whatever diversion BLOODY MARY may provide. Also present is BLOODY MARY'S ASSISTANT. During the singing which covers this change, BLOODY MARY takes a strange looking object out of her pocket and dangles it in front of a sailor, O'BRIEN.)

START

O'BRIEN

What is that thing?

BLOODY MARY

(Holding the small object in her hand.)

Is head. Fifty dolla'.

O'BRIEN

(Revolted.)

What's it made of?

BLOODY MARY

Made outa head! Is real human.

O'BRIEN

(Skeptical.)

What makes it so small?

BLOODY MARY

Shlunk!

(She puts head between hands and squeezes it.)

Only way to keep human head is shlink 'em.

MARINE

No, thanks.

(He leaves quickly.)

END

BLOODY MARY

(To a new customer as she holds a grass skirt up to her waist and starts to do a dance.)

Fo' dolla'. Send home Chicago to saxy sweetheart! She make wave like this.

(Music continues as she starts to dance. One of the SAILORS grabs her and goes into an impromptu jitterbug dance with her. OTHERS join, and soon the beach is alive with gyrating gentlemen of the United States Armed Services. As this spontaneous festivity is at its height, LUTHER BILLIS enters, followed by the PROFESSOR, both loaded with grass skirts. They come down in front of BLOODY MARY and throw the grass skirts at her feet.)

STEW POT

Laundry.

BILLIS

Here you are, Sweaty Pie! Put them down, Professor. These beautiful skirts were made by myself, the Professor here, and three other Seabees in half the time it takes your native workers to make 'em.

(He picks up a skirt and demonstrates.)

See? No stretch!

(Throwing the skirt back on the ground.)

Look 'em over, Sweaty Pie, and give me your price.

(At this point, an altercation starts upstage near the washing machine.)

READ QUALE

HARBISON

...Realistically

(Measuring his words.)

...they could last about a week.

(Pause. BRACKETT considers this.)

START

BRACKETT

Of course, it would be worth it, if it were the right week. With decent information, our side might get moving. Operation Alligator might get off its can.

QUALE

(Entering with large cardboard box.)

Here it is, sir- I got it.

BRACKETT

(To HARBISON.)

Okay, Bill. See you at chow.

(HARBISON looks at the package curiously.)

See you at chow, Bill.

HARBISON

(Snapping out of it.)

Oh, see you at chow.

(He goes out.)

BRACKETT

Got the address right?

QUALE

I think so, sir.

(Reading the box lid.)

Mrs. Amelia Fortuna. Three twenty-five Euclid Avenue, Shaker Heights, Cleveland, Ohio.

BRACKETT

That's right. I want to pack it myself.

QUALE

Yes, sir.

(He exits. BRACKETT starts to whistle. He opens the package and takes out a bright yellow grass skirt and shakes it out. HARBISON re-enters, stands in doorway, unseen by BRACKETT, nods as if his suspicions were confirmed and exits as the lights fade.)

END

READ VOICES AND SAILOR

Scene 3

(After his first line the lights come up revealing the G.I. 'stage', as before, with BRACKETT speaking into the standing microphone at center stage. The MEN onstage, so lively and enthusiastic when last seen, are now in a state of almost total apathy.)

BRACKETT

~~Up to now, our side has been having the hell beat out of it in two hemispheres and we're not going to get to go home until the situation is reversed.~~

(The lights come up.)

It may take a long time before we can get any big operation under way, so it's things like this, like this show tonight, that keep us going. Now I understand that I am not generally considered a sentimental type.

VOICES

Oh, boy! You can say that again!

BRACKETT

Once or twice I understand I have been referred to as "Old Iron Belly."

VOICES

Once or twice!

VOICES

Just about a million times.

BRACKETT

I resent that very much because I had already chosen that as my private name for our Executive Officer, Commander Harbison.

(Big laugh. Applause. He calls into wings.)

Take a bow, Commander.

(Two of the GIRLS pull HARBISON out.)

SAILOR

I wish I was a commander!

(HARBISON, flanked by the two GIRLS, stands beside BRACKETT as he continues.)

END

BRACKETT

I want you to know that both "Old Iron Bellies" sat here tonight and had a hell of a good time. And we want to thank that hardworking committee of Nurses and Seabees who made the costumes out of rope and mosquito nets, comic books, and newspapers...

(He fingers the paper skirt of one of the girls.)

...and thought up these jokes and these grand songs. And I just want to say on this Thanksgiving Day, to all of them from all of us, thank you.

START

BRACKETT

This is one of the most humiliating things that ever happened to me. Adams, when did you discover he was on the plane?

ADAMS

(He accompanies the following speech with descriptive gestures.)

Well, we were flying across Marie Louise, The Jap anti-aircraft spotted us and made that hit. That's when Luther...er...this fellow here- that's when he ...left the ship. I just circled once- time enough to drop him a rubber boat. I flew across the island and landed alongside the sub, let Joe and the Frenchman off. By the time I got back our Navy planes were flying around in the air above this guy like a thick swarm of bees.

(He turns to grin at HARBISON, who gives him no sympathy. He clears his throat and turns back to BRACKETT.)

They kept the Jap guns occupied while I slipped down and scooped him off the rubber boat. You'd have thought this guy was a ninety-million-dollar cruiser they were out to protect. There must have been fifty-five or sixty planes.

BILLIS

Sixty-two.

CUT TO...

BRACKETT

You're not far off, Adams. Harbison tells me this thing cost the Navy about six hundred thousand dollars.

BILLIS

(His face lighting up.)

Six hundred thous...!

BRACKETT

What the hell are you so happy about?

BILLIS

I was just thinking about my uncle.

(To ADAMS.)

He used to tell my old man I'd never be worth a dime!

(He turns to HARBISON.)

Him and his lousy slot machines... Can you imagine a guy...

(HARBISON scowls. BILLIS shuts up quickly.)

BRACKETT

Why the hell did you do this anyway, Billis?

BILLIS*(Again at attention.)*

Well, sir, a fellow has to keep moving. You know, you get kind of held down. If you're itching to take a trip to pick up a few souvenirs, you got to kind of horn in- if you get the picture.

BRACKETT

How did you know about it?

BILLIS

I didn't know about it, exactly. I kind of smelled it. It's just when I heard Lt. Cable talking to that fellow de Becque, right away I know something's in the air. A project. That's what I like, Captain.

(He stands easy, looks at BRACKETT.)

Projects. Don't you?

CONTINUE...

HARBISON*(Fuming.)*

Billis, you've broken every regulation in the book. And, by God, Captain Brackett and I are going to throw it at you.

ADAMS

Sir. May I barge in? My co-pilot watched the whole thing, you know, and he thinks that this fellow Billis down there in the rubber boat with all those planes over him caused a kind of...diversionary action. While all those Japs were busy shooting at the planes and at Billis, on the other side of the island, that sub was sliding into that little cove and depositing the Frenchman and Joe Cable in behind those rocks.

BRACKETT

What the hell do you want me to do? Give this guy a Bronze Star?

BILLIS

I don't want any Bronze Star, Captain. But I could use a little freedom. A little room to swing around in- if you know what I mean. If you get the picture.

*(Looks at BRACKETT who is not amused. He snaps to attention.)***BRACKETT**

Get out of here.

(BILLIS crosses to door, stops and turns to BRACKETT.)

Get the hell out of here!

(Billis exits.)

END

MALE ENS. SIDE 5 or 6

Pg 7/10

READ PILOT

Scene 7

(Lights cross fade to extreme stage right where a group of PILOTS is gathered around a radio set. On the opposite side of the stage, in darkness, stands another group of PILOTS around a contour map.)

~~QUALE~~

Listen carefully.

START

EMILE'S VOICE

(Coming from radio.)

Ceiling today unlimited. Thirty-three fighters- Zeros- have moved in from Bougainville. Their course is approximately 23 degrees. Undoubtedly, heavy bombers will follow.

QUALE

Got that?

(Lights cross fade to group around the map, which is now illuminated.)

ANOTHER PILOT (MAYO)

Well, gentlemen, here's the hot tip for today. Joe and the Frenchman have sighted twenty surface craft heading southeast from Vella Lavella. Christmas is just two weeks away. Let's give those two characters a present- a beautiful view of no ships coming back.

END

~~THIRD PILOT (BLIMLINE)~~

~~Okay with me. Let's go!~~

(The music builds as they exit and the lights fade.)

READ MARINE AND SHORE PATROLMAN Scene 11

(The Company Street is harshly noisy, crowded with MEMBERS of all Forces ready to embark. There are sounds of truck convoys passing.)

VOICE ON LOUDSPEAKER

All right, now hear this. All those outfits that are waiting for loading, please keep in position. We'll get to you as soon as your ship is ready for you.

(BILLIS, STEWPOT and the PROFESSOR enter.)

STEW POT

Hey, Billis, let's head back, huh? Our gang's about a mile back down the beach. Suppose they call our names?

START

PROFESSOR

Yeah! They may be ready for us to go aboard.

BILLIS

They won't be ready for hours yet- this is the Navy-

(He turns and regards the scene offstage.)

Eager Beavers! Look at that beach...swarmin' with 10,000 guys- all jerks!

(Picking out a likely 'jerk')

Hey, Marine.

MARINE (BRADY)

Yeah!

BILLIS

Are you booked on one of those LCT's?

MARINE (BRADY)

I guess so, why?

BILLIS

They'll shake the belly off you, you know.

(He takes out a small package.)

Five bucks an you can have it.

MARINE (BRADY)

What is it?

BILLIS

Seasick remedy. You'll be needing it.

MARINE (BRADY)

Aw, knock it off!

(Pulls out handful of packages from his pocket.)

That stuff's issued. We all got it. Who are you tryin' to fool?

BILLIS

(To STEWPOT.)

These Marines are getting smarter every day.

SHORE PATROLMAN (SAMONSKY)

(Passing through.)

All right, all right. Stay with you own unit.

(To NURSE in combat uniform.)

Ensign, you too. For heaven's sake, don't get spread out over here. We're trying to get this thing organized as quickly as possible, so for God's sake, stay with your outfit!

(To BILLIS.)

Say, Seabee- you belong down the beach.

BILLIS

(Saluting officer.)

Excuse me, sir, could you tell me where we could find Captain Brackett?

SHORE PATROLMAN (SAMONSKY)

(Returning salute.)

He's up at the head of the Company Street. He'll be along any minute now.

BILLIS

(Ending salute.)

Thank you, sir. That's all, sir.

(SHORE PATROLMAN, having started off, stops in his tracks, stunned and rocked off his balance by being thus 'dismissed' by BILLIS. Oh, well- too many important things to be done right now! He goes on his way, shouting.)

SHORE PATROLMAN (SAMONSKY)

All right! Stay in line! How many times have I told you...

(He is off. A NURSE comes by.)

END

BILLIS

Hello, Miss MacGregor. You nurses going too?

NURSE MacGREGOR (GRIFFITH)

Only a few of us. We're going to fly back some wounded.

BILLIS

Is Miss Forbush going with you?

noth-in' else is built the same! _____

Noth-in'

pg 10/10

Br. W.W.

Br. *p*

Hp. Has.
Cello

TENOR SOLO

in the world _____ Has a soft and wav - y

Str. Has.
Cel.

frame like the sil-hou-ette of a dame. _____

Tutti *f*

START

⑧ BASS SOLO

Girls come in. Girls have left Nellie alone with men.

There is ab-so-lute-ly noth-in' like the frame of a dame. _____

Vns.

Str. *pp* hold through scene
p.w.w. (Nellie and Billie)
Has.

STOP