

## Oceanology

Every time I go to the ocean to hear the waves brake or catch some tranquility for my soul, I go to the fishermen's pier to watch the old trade. I came to admire the long habit that makes a man ignore the smell of dead fish. This time I had booked an afternoon tour on a deep-sea fishing boat. They provide me with rod and reel and a hemorrhoid friendly chair to sit in. For \$ 325 I get strapped in with a bottomless cooler full of beer beside me. That's hog heaven for the boat less weekend warrior. Full of expectation and inside two layer of sunblock I am walking down the marina whistling The Rose from Spanish Harlem. There is nothing left in my brain from this past workweek. The sun is high in a cloudless sky and I am walking like a happy Porky Pig cartoon down the boardwalk. That was when I heard a familiar voice calling me.

"Hey yo, Stan my man. What's up?"

It was my friend John Conner, my burlesque mentor with answer for everything under the sun. For you who have not followed my newsletters let me tell you about John Conner. After a minor operation at the local hospital his heart stopped and he was sent to the morgue. He woke up at night, frighten the staff to insomniacs. He found a doctors robe and walked out the front door bare footed. Hailed a cab, went home and downed a six-pack of beer like nothing had happened. He said he played a blank tape at full blast to let the mime next door go nuts. You have to take him with a pinch of salt too you see. I guess the change in his personality just snuck up on him later. Because now his slurries make sense or as he prefers to call it – 80% full proof Guru mixture. So here he is now intervening with my micro holiday.

"I'll bet yo put up the sigh – Gone Fishing – again, haven't yo?"

"Yes I did John. I'm gonna reel in a deep sea monster this time and not bait as last time."

"Which boat is yo sailin' with Stan?"

"The Red Dwarf." I said and looked at him with one eyebrow raised. If my suspicion is right... he is going on the same trip as me. And what do you know, "I'm too." he said with a big grin. He claims to have a black belt in fishing and has several times tried to explain to me that it's not how deep you are fishing. It's how you are wiggling your worm. I have seen that on a T-shirt but the content was something different. So anyhow, he lays his arm around my shoulder and says:

"Let's get piscatorial Stan."

That's when I notice a shadow around his left eye.

"Is that a bruise around yo eye? " I asked him.

"Oh that." he said and looked at me with a movie star smile.

"That's from askin' a female vendor sellin' fish at the market if she had washed her fish today."

Then he pulles out two beer from his shoulder bag and we are getting into fishing mode on this beautiful Saturday morning. We found the boat quickly and both in synchronized motion swinging ourselves over the railing with one hand on the rail. The expectations are great and there are actually two chairs at the aft so we do not have to fight over it as we thought when we were swinging over the rail. The captain casting off and we leaving the harbor in a slow fixed pace, we are not. Two beers each went down before passing the lighthouse. Soon we will not notice the rocking movement of the boat and just concentrate on the curving of the rod. This time we will not underestimate the life beneath us. There is a reason educated maritime life has been to school and describing themselves as still in it thanks to the highly intelligent eco system. The captain's sonar guiding our bait through calm waters and we lure with beers on our hands, double lure if you will.

"Yo Stan, it's like on shore, the biggest fishes are in the calmest waters. Isn't it so huh? " said John.

"Yep. All top floors in bank buildings are infested with them. But also at sea, throw in a lawyer in shark infested waters and the sharks pave out because of professional courtesy."

We were both smiling at that little anecdote, popped open another beer for ourselves and gazed out on the ocean. After a few minutes of roller coasting on the big slow moving waves John said:

"Yo know Stan, we just went back millions of years in time. Out here it's always been like this. A cosmological distance in time an' space ya know. Time travelling Jules Verne style with cold beers an' all."

The captain had overheard us and asked:

"Do you want to go in reversed or forward on my floating machine? "

We all burst out loud in laughter that seemed to go on forever. In my next column I will tell you more about the opinions of my friend John Conner.

Your man in the zone  
*Stanley Mintras*