

the beginning of

TRIUMPH IN ARGENTINA (from **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**)

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

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Time: 1998

Place: A hotel room in Buenos Aires

Characters: TIM, an American
GUSTAV, a German
LULU, Gustav's wife

As the play begins, GUSTAV, LULU and TIM enter the hotel room in which Gustav and Lulu are staying. They're all in a *very* good mood.

GUSTAV

...So then the Polack says to the Chinaman,
"She may be a sheep, but she tastes like chicken."

They all laugh. (*Note:* The rest of the dialogue they take seriously. Better the audience laughs than the actors.)

TIM

That's good.

LULU

Nobody in the world tells a
Polack-Chink joke like Gustav.

GUSTAV

It's a gift.

TIM

Nice room you've got.

GUSTAV

Ach, it probably looks like every
other room in the hotel.

LULU

Or in any hotel.

TIM

You have a great view of the Plaza de Mayo.

GUSTAV

Is zat so?

TIM

You didn't notice?

GUSTAV

We didn't come to Buenos Aires
to stare out a window, Tim.

TIM

You know, I didn't – Why *did* you come?

LULU

Gustav has family here.

TIM

(to Gustav:)

You're Argentinean???

GUSTAV

No. But I have several old relatives
who moved here years ago.

LULU

In the 1940's.

GUSTAV

For their health.

TIM

I see.

LULU

They're wonderful people. And so smart.

GUSTAV

My great uncle Gunter could've gone
so far in the Fatherland if not for,
well you know... politics.

LULU

Gustav, you haven't offered our guest a drink.

GUSTAV

I'm sorry, Lulu. Let's see what's in our mini-fridge.
Would you like a beer? We have Lowenbrau...
and Beck's... and some Amazon swamp piss.

TIM

I'll have a Bud if they have one.

GUSTAV

(a judgment:)

You drink Budweiser?

TIM

Yep.

GUSTAV

American Budweiser?

TIM

You don't like American Budweiser?

GUSTAV

American beer is, well, nothing personal,
Americans are great at, at –

LULU

Wheat.

GUSTAV

Yes, wheat.

LULU

Corn.

GUSTAV

Great corn.

LULU

Nuclear weapons.

GUSTAV

You're the best.

TIM

But you don't like our beer.

GUSTAV

I prefer beer that has – what's
the English word – taste.

TIM

Well, I'd like a Bud.

GUSTAV

I respect how you refuse to compromise your American commitment to mediocrity.

LULU

Maybe we'll give you one later, Tim, *if* you've earned it.

TIM

I'm sure I will.

GUSTAV

He's so confident.

TIM

Yes, I am.

GUSTAV

That's so American. –

TIM

Thanks.

GUSTAV

– Like how you're going to take over my wife is, is "manifest destiny".

LULU

I'm so glad you were dining at that restaurant.

TIM

I'm glad you invited me over.

LULU

Well, when I saw you eating that thick slab of Argentinean beef, I turned to Gustav, and said, "Gustav, look at him. He's so carnivorous."

GUSTAV

So few American men seem comfortable around red meat.

LULU

The way you devoured that steak, it made me wish I were a dead cow.

TIM

Thanks.

LULU

I would've never guessed you were an economist, specializing in, in –

TIM

Latin American development.

GUSTAV

You Americans are so generous, always giving advice to other countries on how to be a second-rate America.

TIM

I hope to do more than that. I know 1998's been a rocky year for Argentina, but with the proper management controls, I think it can have the same boom we're having.

GUSTAV

Americans are the best. Your buildings are the tallest, your ketchup is the thickest –

TIM

So you said there was a rather complicated scenario you wanted me to play.

GUSTAV

Are you sure you're ready for it?

TIM

I'm ready for *anything*.

GUSTAV

I like that. You have that American gung-ho-ness. No wonder you won World War II.

LULU

And World War I.

GUSTAV

How many times do I have to tell you: World War I was a draw!

LULU

Okay.

TIM

Shall we start?

GUSTAV

Such impatience, Tim. I'm offering you a delicacy. Don't treat it like fast food.

TIM

I just thought in the restaurant you said you wanted me to –

GUSTAV

(overlapping with the above)

What I meant was –

LULU

Enough yakkin'. Let's start shtuppin'.

TIM

Fine by me.

GUSTAV

Okay, we start. I can see why McDonald's doesn't offer appetizers. So this is what Lulu and I like. I will be sitting in the corner; pretend I'm not here.

TIM

All right.

LULU

I will be lying in bed in my lingerie, looking at the ceiling, and lightly stroking my zeitgeist.

GUSTAV

You enter the room –

LULU

I sit up.

GUSTAV

And you rip off your clothes.

LULU

We kiss, we fondle, we lick and rub and rub and lick, for four to six minutes.

GUSTAV

And then my wife grabs your bratwurst, shoves it inside her beer stein, and yells –

LULU

"Fuck me, Adolf!"

GUSTAV

And you reply, *"Adolf's fucking you, baby!"*

TIM

What?!

GUSTAV

If you prefer, you can say, "Adolf's fucking you, honey." That's good, too.

TIM

You want me to – I'm not going to say I'm Hitler!

GUSTAV

We're not using last names.

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