

The following is excerpted from

“LOVE AT THE TROPICANA”

A Two Character (Sort Of) Romantic Comedy

By Ken Levine

When Doug, a gay man is drafted in 1965 knowing the dangers of either declaring himself or being exposed, he asks his best friend Barbara to marry him and take advantage of the marriage deferment. A sort of romantic comedy.

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LOVE AT THE TROPICANA

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SYNOPSIS – When Doug, a gay man is drafted in 1965 knowing the dangers of either declaring himself or being exposed, he asks his best friend Barbara to marry him and take advantage of the marriage deferment. A sort of romantic comedy.

CHARACTERS:

DOUG -- Early 20's, gay but not overtly. Wicked sense of humor.

BARBARA – Early 20's, straight, has a penchant for picking the wrong guy.

SETTING:

Coffee Shop at the Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas. 1965

LOVE AT THE TROPICANA

COFFEE SHOP -- TROPICANA HOTEL, LAS VEGAS -- NIGHT

BARBARA sits at a small table smoking. She is in her early 20's, wearing a Tropicana cocktail waitress uniform, hair in a flip with a headband (a la Patty from "The Patty Duke Show.")

DOUG enters and crosses to her table. He is in his early 20's, with short coiffed hair wearing a blue blazer and stylish white turtleneck. If he looks like someone on the "Eyewitness" News Team that's because he is. Doug is gay but shows no outward appearance of it, either in dress or manner. The only possible tip off is his arch sense of humor, which he shows off to very few people. Barbara is one.

He gives Barbara a quick friendly kiss then sits down.

DOUG

Evening, princess. Well, as we head into 1965, the Tropicana Hotel with its "improvements" is now officially the tackiest hotel in Las Vegas. The fake palm trees and jungle bird calls wasn't enough. They've added a humongous waterfall to the lobby. Relive the majesty of King Kamehemeha's urinal.

BARBARA

We now serve certain cocktails in skulls.

DOUG

Plastic, or will people actually be drinking out of Bugsy Siegel's head?

BARBARA

That's four dollars extra.

DOUG

Is there anyone in the Mafia with taste? It's a giant multi-layered organization. There's not one person who can pick out colors? I think the state should say to these people, all right, we'll give you gaming licenses and we don't care what unspeakable gangster activity goes on in the casinos, but you are not allowed to give your hotels "themes."

BARBARA

Okay, Doug, what is it?

DOUG

What is what?

BARBARA

You're going off on one of your rants. That usually means you have something on your mind you're uncomfortable talking about.

DOUG

Barbara, you know me better than any living soul.

BARBARA

You only have one rant.

DOUG

Touche. I got my draft notice today.

BARBARA

Oh no.

DOUG

Yes, I don't want to equate it with the JFK tragedy, but at least with that I could play records and forget about it.

BARBARA

How screwed is this country when Uncle Sam wants you? No offense.

DOUG

Oh, I hear ya. And if you've been watching our newscasts lately, you know that things are really getting horrendous in Vietnam. It's a jungle over there. Imagine the Tropicana main lobby but with snipers.

BARBARA

I'm so sorry.

DOUG

Give me two Bugsy Siegels and a straw.

BARBARA

There have to be ways of getting out of it. What if you moved to Canada?

DOUG

I thought about it, but if I do that I can never come back. I'd spend the rest of my life trapping moose.

BARBARA

Okay, do you have any ailments that could get you out?

DOUG

Chapped lips.