

THE EXCHANGE
by

Stan Everett

© 2011, Stan Everett

Stan Everett
5722 S. Flamingo Road, #612
Cooper City, FL 33330

"THE EXCHANGE"

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

SHANE MARCELO. All American, mid twenties, rugged, day old beard growth, semi muscular build, is laying in his bed tossing and turning violently. We see different items in his room that share his personality; a poster of a Harley Davidson motorcycle is next to a poster of a bodybuilder striking a pose. The VCR is playing a Bruce Lee film, "Enter the Dragon."

...the room is small and musty with puke brown paneling and tattered brown shag carpet, it is a place he does not care for, but must have for shelter.

...Shane is yelling frantically for ELENA, his mother, it is a recurrent nightmare he has had since he was six years old; lately though, they occur more often and become increasingly violent. It is always the same though, his mother calling out to him and he never reaching her on time, yet, somehow he seems to get closer each time to knowing the truth.

EXT. NIGHT - WOODED HILLTOP

Shane is dreaming again, he is in a densely wooded hilltop that leads to a ravine, he is searching for his mother who is screaming out to him for help, he must find her.

ELENA O.S.

Shane...Please help me, help me!

Shane enters a clearing running towards the voice knowing every second counts.

SHANE

Mom, where are you?

She is yelling out to him, unable to answer, each time her voice is louder and more urgent.

ELENA

Shane...Shane!

Shane approaches the end of the ravine where he sees an image of his mother precariously dangling from a cliff, she is struggling, hanging on by two hands and then only one.

SHANE

Mom, I'm coming, hang on, I'll save you.

He gets closer and closer and he almost sees her face but he is focused on grabbing her hand, he almost reaches her, to touch her, he grabs for her hand only to hear her scream as she falls away from him in the darkness, he watches as her struggling figure crashes on a group of boulders below and lies limp in the cold misty darkness. Shane awakens abruptly and jumps from his bed shaking in a cold sweat, he heads for his shower and sets the water on the hottest setting. He disrobes and steps in. The water streams down the back of his neck as he tries to forget the dream that torments him day and night.

INT. EARLY MORNING - KITCHEN

Shane walks into the kitchen to see a scene that has burned itself into his mind so many times before, that is, his FATHER, a mid fifties construction worker, good looking, tanned, heavy but muscular from years of on-again off-again hard labor, a chain smoker. He is reading the paper and smoking, sitting at a circular yellow dinette set.

Shane enters the room and puts his motorcycle helmet and bookbag on the table.

SHANE

Morning, Dad.

His father belches loudly, he ignores the lack of manners.

SHANE

You know, I had a bad dream about mom again last night, and do you mind not smoking, I don't want to go to school smelling like a damn ash tray.

FATHER O.S.

If you don't like it then...

He mouths the words with him, he has heard it so many times before.

FATHER O.S. (CONT.)

...you can get your lazy ass out of my house! When I was your age I was working three jobs to support you and your mother, all you do is go to that half-time minority college and spend your time in the gym, pumping yourself.

He makes a motion with his wrist.

SHANE

Really dad, and who has supported you for the last two years?

Father throws down his newspaper.

FATHER

Oh yeah, how could I forget that great job at the Cuban diner serving that Cuban lard shit! I can tell all my construction buddies, hey guys, your son is a doctor, well my son flips greaseburgers at the Oye' Express, I'm so proud!

SHANE

You can't tell anyone anything dad, remember, you haven't worked for over three years.

Father is infuriated at this statement and leaps to his feet.

FATHER

God damn you, if you were any type of son you'd get a real job so I wouldn't have to work. But maybe you like them damn Cubans, its' a God Damn shame, a good ol' American boy taking orders from some damn refugees!

Shane walks to the table to pick up his helmet and bookbag.

SHANE

Is that right, dad? Does the name Elena Garcia mean anything to you? What happened that you would leave my mother behind, to die in Cuba?

Father jolts from the table and smashes him across the mouth. Shane is taken aback by the blow, used to it, but not expecting this one, it stings deep, he struggles to his feet. He stares at the floor as blood spills from the corner of his mouth.

FATHER

Don't you ever say that again, you understand! If you were any kind of man you'd be proud to be an American and forget about all that crap!

He methodically picks up his helmet and bookbag and heads for the door wiping the blood from his mouth on his sleeve. Standing in the doorway, he turns to his father.

SHANE

Don't you preach to me about loyalty, I'd give my life for this Country and I'll never forget the past, never. I won't stop until I find out the truth about her!

FATHER

Promises, promises, that's right carry your ass on out of here, you'll never amount to anything.

Father sits back down at the table and picks up the paper. Shane walks outside and slams his helmet repeatedly against the wall not wanting to take the abuse anymore.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Shane is headed to college on his chrome on black Harley Davidson motorcycle, it is his pride and joy. An older model he painstakingly restored himself, it is all he has in the world. He is zooming in and out of traffic, handling himself like a pro. A police officer in a cruiser notices his recklessness and gives chase, this excites him even more. He speeds up and does a sliding U-turn and passes the police car heading in the opposite direction, he pulls a wheely and pulls into the college campus, safe for now, but still reeling from the days events.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

This is an atypical college classroom in that it takes place in Miami, therefore, the majority of students are Hispanic. There are about twenty students in class. Shane walks into class late and the only seat left is in front of ZORIDA GONZALEZ, towards the front of the room. Most of the girls look at him and smile but she scoffs as he takes the seat in front of her. Zorida is a feisty, attractive Latin woman in her mid twenties, she has dark tanned skin and striking, jet black long hair. Shane tries to get to his chair unnoticed as PROFESSOR GALLEN is speaking.

SHANE

Is anyone sitting here?

ZORIDA

Class started five minute ago.

SHANE

And...

ZORIDA

I don't see anyone sitting there,
do you, I think its' safe to assume
its' vacant.

He coldly stares her in the eyes, takes his seat and mouths a
word.

SHANE V.O.
(whispers)

Bitch.

She expects this from him, there is a strange sense of
attraction between them.

ZORIDA O.S.

Excuse me?

SHANE
Oh, nothing, nothing.

She turns to her friend, MARIA, agitated by his arrogance.

ZORIDA

He is such an asshole and he thinks
he is so damn good.

Maria is amused by this and recognizes her friends attraction
for him.

MARIA

Well your right about one thing...

She looks directly at his butt.

MARIA (CONT.)

Esta Bueno!

She is entertained by her friends comment and smiles at her
thinking about what she has said. The Professor speaks up.
PROFESSOR GALLEN, is a bespectacled man in his late fifties,
always wears a bow tie and has had the same briefcase for over
twenty years.

PROFESSOR GALLEN

Class, if I may have your attention, "Miami Community College," in association with the "Cuban American Educational Society," is offering the first ever student exchange between Cuba and the United States. The reason our college has been chosen to participate in this unique program is two-fold. First, due to our large Latin enrollment along with our continuing support of issues concerning the Latin community. Second, obviously because of our close relationship with the Society. In fact, our own Zorida Gonzalez will be participating.

Class is clapping for her, Shane claps half-heartedly.

PROFESSOR GALLEN

That will be all for today, if you require any further information, please see Miss Gonzalez. Shane, please see me after class.

Class goes woooo! Zorida looks at Maria, smiles, and walks up to Shane.

ZORIDA

Maybe you should try to get to class on time motorcycle boy.

He is caught up by her beauty and forthrightness, he can't help but watch her walk out imagining what it would be like to be with her.

SHANE

You wanted to see me, Professor?

The professor does not look up from his notes.

PROFESSOR GALLEN

Yes, you were late, again.

SHANE

Yessir, I apologize for that, it won't happen again.

The professor looks up from his notes.

PROFESSOR GALLEN

In the three years that I have known you, I suspect that is entirely untrue. In any case, my purpose in speaking with you is that I would like for you to seriously consider the "Exchange Program" I referred to earlier.

Shane laughs pessimistically.

SHANE

I don't think so sir, besides, Zorida and I don't get along very well and the idea of being trapped on an island with her isn't my idea of fun.

The professor gathers his notes and papers into his briefcase.

PROFESSOR GALLEN

Since I have been your professor these last few years, what one thought has been in the forefront of your mind?

SHANE

Finding out the truth about my mother.

PROFESSOR GALLEN

Exactly. Off the record, this is the vehicle by which you may be able to accomplish that goal. I have lobbied hard to get you that chance and the faculty, with the exception of Mrs. Hackett...

They both snicker.

PROFESSOR GALLEN (CONT.)

...we feel that you are the best candidate. Your mother was Cuban, you have a 3.7 G.P.A., you speak fluent Spanish and your major is Governmental Relations, you are a good aspirant.

SHANE

Well since you put it that way, Professor. No, seriously, you have been a great help to me and I respect your opinion, I will consider your advice carefully. As you know my mother died when I was young and I am determined to find out the truth about her.

The professor stands to his feet and puts his hand on Shane's shoulder.

PROFESSOR GALLEN

There is a meeting tomorrow night in the school theater at 7:30 p.m. to be given by the Educational Society, I don't suppose it would do any good to ask you to be there on time.

They look at each other for an instant and laugh, knowing he'll be late.

SHANE

Yes, sir.

As Shane is walking out of the classroom there are three guys picking on the class nerd, he hesitates for a moment but it is not within him to help, he struggles with his feelings of inadequacy. The physical strength and skill are within him but he has been battered down by years of abuse by his father, he walks out.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Shane is walking toward the motorcycle parking area when his friend, VAN, twenty something, hip-hop, lanky, approaches.

VAN

Yo, yo Shane, what up?

He extends his closed fist to him.

SHANE

What's up with you man?

He hits his closed fist on top of Van's extended hand.

VAN

Oh, you know, same old, same old, lookin for some sweet young thing to help me out with my studies.

He smiles slyly and spots a group of Latin ladies.

VAN

Hola', ladies, Como Estas?

Shane laughs at his friends brazenness, the ladies smile.

VAN

What happened to your lip, bro?

SHANE

I had it out with the old man this morning.

VAN

Man, why don't you just pop that old bastard.

He makes an uppercut motion with his arm.

SHANE

Besides Aunt Rosie, we're all each others got.

Van puts his arm around him jovially.

VAN

Yo, you got me, what else do you need? We workin' out today or what...last one there is a pussy!

They strap on their helmets and jump on their motorcycles. They rev their motorcycles loudly and wheely out of the parking lot causing quite a commotion.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Shane and Van race through the streets recklessly having no regard for themselves or safety. They cut off a semi-tractor trailer filled with watermelons causing a chain reaction accident spreading melons all over the road. Upon seeing this Van raises his hand in the air victoriously, pulling into the parking lot thinking he has won. Shane jumps the median and pulls in first.

SHANE

Sorry, bud, you know what this makes you.

VAN

Oh yeah, well you know what they say, you are what you eat!

Shane shakes his head laughing. Van holds the door open for him and bends over graciously to allow him in first.

SHANE

Why thank you kind sir.

VAN

Always a pleasure.

INT. CUBAN CAFE - DUSK

This is a typical Miami Cuban cafe where half of the restaurant is indoors and the other half is open to the outside. It is decorated with a lot of color and flamboyancy. Shane enters and sits down at the bar to eat, he is served by his AUNT ROSIE, a heavy Latin woman, early fifties, with a thick Cuban accent.

AUNT ROSIE

Hola', Shane my boy, Como Estas?

SHANE

Bien, Tia Rosie, y tu'?

He kisses her on the cheek.

AUNT ROSIE

Muy Bien, now how about my famous Bistec de Palomilla con tostones, frijoles negros, tu' favorito, no?

SHANE

How did you know?

She looks at him and cackles.

AUNT ROSIE

My boy, I've been feeding this to you since you were seven years old, how you think you get so big?

SHANE

Aunt Rosie, if you had a chance to find out what happened to my mother, would you?

AUNT ROSIE

You been thinking about her, no?

He grabs her hand for support.

SHANE

All I have is a few pictures and the stories you have told me, you know my father, he wants to take it all away.

She shakes her head disapprovingly.

AUNT ROSIE

Sometimes the pain is too much, he tries to hide.

SHANE

He takes it out on me.

He looks her in the eyes optimistically.

SHANE (CONT.)

I have a chance to find out the truth. The school is having an exchange program with Cuba.

Frightened, she grabs both his hands.

AUNT ROSIE

No, no, no you cannot do this, I can't lose you like I did tu' mama.

SHANE

Its' o.k., its' o.k. It is all legal and with the Cuban Government's permission. I haven't committed yet, there is a meeting tomorrow night, I will get some more information. Don't worry.

He pushes her off, gently.

SHANE (CONT.)

Now, please, can I eat?

She puts her hands to her mouth in shock.

AUNT ROSIE

Ay Dios, Ay Dios Mio, I forgot, you wait here.

She walks off mumbling to herself, he is scanning the room when he sees Zorida walk in with Maria and Maria's parents. He is mesmerized by her beauty. She is wearing a yellow, print, short, "Laura Ashley" dress. Aunt Rosie delivers his food singing a Latin song and catches him staring at her. He devours the meal.

SHANE

That was delicioso, Now I must get to work before I get fired.

AUNT ROSIE

That's right, you get to work.

She hands him an apron, he starts to walk off and hesitates, he goes up to her and puts his arms around her.

SHANE

Thanks for all you've done for me, I won't forget it.

She kisses him on the cheek.

AUNT ROSIE

To me, you are like my own son.

He starts to wait tables and as he is walking by Zorida's table she calls out to him not recognizing him.

ZORIDA

Excuse me, we're ready to order.

He looks her in the eyes and smiles, then bends over like a servant.

SHANE

Yes ma'am, how may I serve you?

ZORIDA

What are you doing here?

SHANE

You look beautiful.

ZORIDA

Gracias, I mean, thank you...

She is taken aback, he has caught her off guard.

ZORIDA (CONT.)

I'll have the Ropa Vieja con Frijoles Negros y Arroz Blanco.

SHANE

And for you?

He motions to Maria's elderly parents.

ZORIDA

Oh, they only speak Spanish, I'll order for them.

