

JEFFERSON

We are at a press conference at Heathrow Airport featuring JEFFERSON STEEL. JEFFERSON is an ageing Hollywood star; good looking, charming; arrogant and insecure. He is good at being a celebrity and enjoys the showbiz spotlight. During the conference flash bulbs pop and the JOURNALISTS shout his name to try and get his attention.

JEFFERSON Its good to be back. I love this place.

FIRST JOURNALIST (o.s.) What, Heathrow?

JEFFERSON And your crazy English sense of humour! You guys slay me.

SECOND JOURNALIST (ojt.) Mr. Steel, Mr. Steel - this is a pretty big departure for your career isn't it?

JEFFERSON Not really. I'm an actor. Acting's what I do. Theatre has always been my first love. And deep down I've always wanted to repay my debt to the muse.

FIRST JOURNALIST (o.s.) Ever since they cancelled your last movie?

JEFFERSON (laughs without amusement) No...the Ultimate Finality franchise had reached the end of its natural life and I had been looking for fresh challenges.

SECOND JOURNALIST (o.s.) What made you say 'yes*' to Shakespeare?

JEFFERSON I get sent hundreds of scripts every week. This one stood out.

THIRD JOURNALIST (o.S.) Why?

JEFFERSON The writing. Showed real talent.

FIRST JOURNALIST (o.s.) But can an American action hero really be King Lear?

JEFFERSON To he, or not to he. That is the question.

JEFFERSON is pleased with himself despite getting the wrong play.

Besides, my agent tells me I get all the good lines and I'm in every scene.

FIRST JOURNALIST (o.s.) Yeah. But isn't it going to be a bit of a comedown for a star like yourself performing in such a small theatre?

JEFFERSON If there's only one person out there, then I'll play to them. And I follow in illustrious theatrical footsteps. Many fellow Hollywood stars have performed in England. Nicole, Dustin, Gwyneth, Spacey. But none before have performed Shakespeare in... Stratford. This marks the pinnacle of my career. Jefferson Steel is at the top of his game.

SECOND JOURNALIST (o.8.) But you'll be acting with amateurs.

JEFFERSON You guys are too hard on yourselves. Some British actors aren't so bad.

THIRD JOURNALIST (o.s.) So are you really going to save the theatre?

JEFFERSON gives them a big Hollywood smile.

JEFFERSON It's a tall order, but as Jack Finality says to the president at the end of Ultimate Finality Four - I'll give it my best shot.

STEEL mimes shooting a gun and blowing away the smoke. Press conference footage ends. Darkness.

JEFFERSON

JEFFERSON Can you tell the concierge my bags are ready.

DOROTHY Good morning Mr. Steel.

JEFFERSON You again?

JEFFERSON can't remember her name.

DOROTHY Dorothy.

JEFFERSON Dorothy. I want you to tell your people that I'm not happy with the accommodation.

DOROTHY turns to MARY in a very formal way.

DOROTHY Mary. Apparently Mr. Steel isn't happy with the accommodation.

MARY is crestfallen.

MARY (to DOROTHY) I'm very sorry. He's in the best room I've got.

DOROTHY turns back to JEFFERSON in the same formal way.

DOROTHY The management is very sorry Mr. Steel but you are occupying the best room available.

JEFFERSON You're kidding, right?

DOROTHY (to MARY) Mary. Are you kidding

DOROTHY looks at MARY's face then turns back to JEFFERSON.

She's not kidding.

JEFFERSON But the room doesn't have an en-suite.

MARY The facilities are only just down the hall.

JEFFERSON I found them. Eventually. Only after stumbling

into some broad's room who was snoring like a foghorn...

MARY Yes well I am terribly sorry that room is all I have.

JEFFERSON Come on. Next you'll be telling me you don't have a health club!

DOROTHY Nor does Mary have a banqueting suite or conferencing facilities. The clue is in the words "bed" and "breakfast". I am afraid this job will require you to make a few compromises.

JEFFERSON is getting increasingly panicky

JEFFERSON I am not an unreasonable man. I can do compromise. Ask my ex wife. She got everything. But as a Hollywood A-lister you must understand that I have to maintain my status.

MARY I can see that. yes.

JEFFERSON Otherwise the rest of the cast won't respect me. Its a natural hierarchy. So as the guy at the top of the food chain I do have a few very basic requirements.

DOROTHY Of course you do.

DOROTHY gets out her notebook.

JEFFERSON I want a minibar. home cinema, pool table, jukebox.

DOROTHY scribbles.

DOROTHY Is that all?

JEFFERSON No. I also want fresh flowers daily, oh and a dietician and a personal trainer.

DOROTHY Well that's certainly not unreasonable. We will certainly see what we can do won't we Mary? In the meantime shall I take you to the rehearsal.

MARY I'll catch up with you later.

MARY clears table.

JEFFERSON OK - where's the car?

DOROTHY There isn't a car, sorry, and unfortunately the helicopter is out of service so I am afraid we are going to have to walk.

JEFFERSON Nobody walks in L.A.

DOROTHY Oh you'll find its really very easy, You just put one foot in front of the other. You'll soon get the hang of it.

They begin walking array from the bed and breakfast round the back of the set (or across the auditorium)

JEFFERSON Add that to my list, I want a limo to take me to and from the set.

DOROTHY It really isn't very far.

JEFFERSON I don't care how far it is, it is totally unreasonable to expect your leading actor on top of all his other responsibilities and commitments to have to trek all the way...

DOROTHY We are here.

JEFFERSON Oh.