

BAT COUNTRY

Written by

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In a shameless ripoff of Hunter S Thompson, "Bat Country" tells the story of Amelia Duke, as she comes face to face with personifications of the evils of modern life in the midst of a bad LSD trip in a cheap motel room.

1 EXT. BEACH - EVENING

1

A litter-strewn beach in Winthrop, MA. Nearing midnight. Some abandoned beach chairs sit next to a cooler.

AMELIA DUKE stands at the edge of the ocean. She is wearing a bucket hat and holds a large American flag around her shoulders.

AMELIA (V.O.)
Winthrop, Massachusetts. July of
the year two thousand and nineteen.
As good a place as any to keep tabs
on the fallout.

Amelia steps into the waves.

The sound of a plane taking off in the distance.

AMELIA (V.O.)
How had I arrived at this garbage
strewn edge of the earth, with
planes from Logan Airport
continually intruding on what
should have been a pleasant seaside
drug-fuelled reverie?

2 EXT. ORIENT HEIGHTS STATION - DAY

2

Literally the Orient Heights Blue line station. Grimy. A train rushes past.

AMELIA (V.O.)
We'd decided to make the trek from
the Blue Line on foot, our spirits
buoyed from copious amounts of
lukewarm Sam Adams beer that looked
remarkably like piss.

Amelia and two friends, FRANK and LACEY emerge from the station. They have beach chairs and a cooler.

Frank and Lacey walk ahead, chatting to each other loudly and having a great time.

Amelia walks behind, sipping a beer and squinting behind her sunglasses.

AMELIA (V.O.)

It was a hike, and we were drenched in sweat but it was guaranteed to be faster than waiting for a 716 bus that would likely never come.

LACEY

Come on, what are you doing?

Amelia jogs to catch up with the others.

AMELIA (V.O.)

Due to my introspective nature I could already feel myself slipping into a state of extreme disconnect from my extroverted companions.

I remember saying something along the lines of...

AMELIA

When is Tom meeting us?

AMELIA (V.O.)

Tom, of course, being our supplier for the evening.

LACEY

He'll be down at the beach.

Shots of the group walking down random streets in Winthrop. Lacey and Frank go into a liquor store and Amelia waits outside.

Shots of Lacey and Frank having a good time. Some of it in slow motion. Lacey pulls out some bubbles and blows them... other interesting visuals tbd.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

Amelia, Frank and Lacey sit on beach chairs. The umbrella pole with the American flag is fluttering nearby. Frank and Lacey chat and Amelia stares blankly into the sea.

AMELIA (V.O.)

At this point I was beginning to have doubts as to why I was even there.

Lacey gets up to greet an approaching man, TOM. She hugs him and leads him over to the chairs.

AMELIA (V.O.)

But in my experience when you are living in Back Bay on a writer's salary and offered a drug binge at no cost to you, it in is your best interest financially to accept.

Frank hands Tom some crumpled bills, and Tom sits down crosslegged on a beach towel across from Amelia.

He pulls a deck of oversized cards from his pocket. They have a black and white pattern on the backside. He shuffles them without turning them over, finally pulling out a thin sheet of foil and handing it to Frank.

Frank and Lacey giggle and "cheers" their tabs. They eat them and wash them down with their cheap beer.

They light off sparklers as Amelia monologues.

Amelia squints at Tom as she puts the tab meaningfully on her tongue.

AMELIA (V.O.)

There's a certain type of person who found in the use of LSD a heightened truth.

These sensitive nonconformist types aren't always hiding in the fringes. Sometimes they rise to the top. The freedom that comes with a case of mild nihilism is a surprisingly potent ingredient in conventional success.

TOM

What are you thinking about?

AMELIA

Airplanes. Nihilism. Bats. That kind of thing.

What are those?

TOM

Cards.

AMELIA

No shit.

TOM

Here, you shuffle them.

AMELIA
What are they, like, Tarot cards?

TOM
Not exactly. But, they do have
something to say.

Amelia shuffles the cards clumsily on the top of a cooler. As she does, a card falls out of the deck. It blows away in the wind.

We see the card blowing through the sky and landing on the beach.

Shot of the card stuck in the sand. It reads "BAT COUNTRY: AN OFF HAND CO PRODUCTION".

4 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

4

Back to Amelia later in the night. She is sitting in the waves. The American flag is wrapped around her like a cape or towel.

She shivers and shakily gets to her feet.

Amelia walking along the beach.

AMELIA (V.O.)
I needed to get off the beach. I
was in grave danger of a fish
attack. Or worse. Crustaceans.

5 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

5

A motel room.

The keys rattle in the door. Amelia steps in. The flag is still wrapped around her. She flicks on the lights.

AMELIA (V.O.)
I carefully tiptoed along the
divide between space and time,
praying that my trip would not slip
out of my control until I'd checked
myself into a motel.

She stumbles to a mirror where she looks herself up and down. Then she takes off the bucket hat she is wearing and swaps it for a different bucket hat.

She sits down at the table and pulls out the cards.

She lays the set on the table in three stacks, and flips over the first card. It has an illustration of a skeleton and reads "FAMINE".

A doorbell rings. Amelia jumps.

The door opens. A DELIVERY MAN enters carrying a large bag of McDonalds.

DELIVERY MAN
Delivery for Amelia Duke.

AMELIA
I didn't order any food.

DELIVERY MAN
Are you Amelia Duke?

AMELIA
You've got the wrong Amelia Duke.
Try down the hall. I think I saw
another one in room six.

Delivery Man examines the receipt stapled to the bag.

DELIVERY MAN
It says room 12. Is this room 12?

AMELIA
Listen, I'm not going to say no if
you want to give me that food. But
if you're under the impression that
I'm going to pay for it... I am
not.

The Delivery Man pulls up a chair and begins setting the food out on the table. He pulls up a chair and sits across from Amelia. He begins laying out the various cartons of McDonalds, including two medium fries and milkshakes.

She looks up and sees his name tag which also reads "FAMINE".

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Famine?

He shakes his head, winking at her and picks up the FAMINE tarot card from the table. He lays it meaningfully on a box of McNuggets directly in front of Amelia.

She picks up the card, holding it up to compare the two faces.

DELIVERY MAN

Go on, eat.

AMELIA (V.O.)

At this point I had no way of distinguishing between reality and the fabrications of my drug-riddled imagination. My choices were to attempt to banish this potential apparition or to play along.

She picks up a box of fries and begins shoving them into her mouth.

AMELIA (V.O.)

Never one to shy away from the path of least resistance, I played. Also the smell of fries was making me hungry.

AMELIA

(through a mouth of food)
If you're called Famine, why did you bring me food?

DELIVERY MAN

This is barely food.

He examines a fry.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

A perfectly designed combination of chemicals to convince your brain that it's sustaining your body. I couldn't have done it better myself...

She tries to take a bite of a fry but it has turned to rubber (or something equally inedible). She begins to choke.

The Delivery Man laughs. He takes a large bite out of a burger and it turns into bugs in his mouth.

So like here we can get really gross and messy and come up with some more ideas as we see what's available.

Amelia, choking, desperately reaches for one of the milkshakes. But when she takes a sip, she immediately spits out blood.

Amelia looks horrified at her milkshake. She opens the top and turns it over to pour it out and it turns into marbles which rattle to the floor.

She looks up. The Delivery Man is gone. There is some perfectly normal McDonald's food on the table in front of her.

She is holding the milkshake with no lid. She reaches in with one finger and examines the pink ice cream-y liquid on her finger. She looks confused, and then runs out the door.

6 EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE MOTEL - NIGHT

6

A wall, the side of the motel. There is a "NO SMOKING" sign hanging on the wall.

Amelia runs out, panting. She throws the milkshake against the wall.

There is a loud clicking sound and Amelia turns.

There are two lawn chairs with a small rickety table between them. A woman sits in one chair. She is covered in cobwebs and seems to almost blend into her surroundings. There are crumpled pieces of paper and plastic bottles at her feet. In one hand she is holding a cigarette which she lets burn. She is POLLUTION.

AMELIA

Sorry, I'll pick it up.

POLLUTION

No, leave it.

She ashes her cigarette in an ashtray made out of trash.

POLLUTION (CONT'D)

Come, sit down.

Amelia looks suspicious. She examines the chair, then sits.

POLLUTION (CONT'D)

Beautiful, isn't it.

AMELIA (V.O.)

I thought she must mean the stars.

Amelia looks up, the sky is smoky.

AMELIA (V.O.)

... but I couldn't see any.

The woman turns up the radio. Someone is reading death tolls of a natural disaster through heavy static.

AMELIA

Are you talking about all of those
people dying.

Pollution nods.

POLLUTION

Tsunami, earthquake, fire...

It all makes me so much more
powerful.

Amelia looks down and sees that there is suddenly lots of
litter all over the ground around them.

POLLUTION (CONT'D)

And you're doing all my work for
me...

The woman pulls out a card which reads "POLLUTION" below it's
illustration.

Amelia takes the card from her hand. As she does, it begins
to burn.

Smoke has begun to appear around Pollution. Amelia drops the
card. She looks down to see that the trash on the ground in
front of her has caught fire. She tries to stamp it out with
her shoe.

7

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

7

Amelia bursts through the door. She holds one shoe which is
singed and smoking slightly. She shuts the door behind her
and locks it.

Awful, screeching circus music begins to play. A woman
dressed in an approximation of a medieval queen's outfit sits
on the bed surrounded by a pile of money. She is THE QUEEN
She giggles and waves at Amelia.

A JESTER in a circus outfit fans the Queen.

AMELIA

For fucks sake...
I've got the wrong room, I'll go...

She turns to leave but the Queen raises her hands the door
slams shut behind her.

The Queen giggles.

THE QUEEN

I think you'll find you have
exactly the right room, Amelia
Duke.

The Jester has laid the cards across the table. She flips on
and places it in the middle. It reads "CORRUPTION".

AMELIA

Please, please just leave me alone.

THE QUEEN

I'll do whatever you need, darling.
For a price.

She fans herself with some dollar bills.

She winks.

THE QUEEN (CONT'D)

You can give it to me. Or I can
take it. Either way I always get
what I want.

Go on, bow to me.

AMELIA

What? I don't even know what you
want me to give you...

THE QUEEN

I said bow to me.

AMELIA

No...

THE QUEEN

You will bow to me!

AMELIA

Or what?

The Queen nods to the jester. There is a click and suddenly
the jester is standing right beside Amelia with a gun to her
head.

THE QUEEN

You will do as I say! Or pay the
price.

She giggles.

AMELIA (V.O.)

At this point I had given up any attempt to sift through the information that my senses were delivering to my brain for kernels of truth. My ties to the experience formerly known as reality had been long severed, and I was becoming uneasy at the creeping notion that I might never be able to return.

The key was not to panic.

Amelia screams, grabs the gun and points it at the Queen. She shoots three times, red marks appear across the Queen's bodice as each bullet hits. There is suddenly the sound of coins hitting the floor. Amelia falls to the floor and coins rain around her. She slowly raises herself to peer onto the bed. The Queen is gone. She breathes a sign of relief.

AMELIA

It's okay, I'm okay... It wasn't real...I'm alone now...

She sees that the "CORRUPTION" card with the image of the Queen is on the bed where she had just been sat. She picks up the card and rips it in half.

As she does this, we see the jester in the background. She creeps up behind Amelia, holding an American flag bandana. The jester suddenly shoves the bandana over Amelia's mouth and she passes out. The screen goes black.

8 INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

8

Amelia lays on the centre of the bed wearing a hospital gown. Her arms are crossed and hold a card over her chest. She raises it. It says "PLAGUE".

We see from her perspective as a DOCTOR, dressed in hospital scrubs with a mask over their face leans over her.

Amelias eyes open suddenly and she gasps.

The doctor begins to set out surgical instruments on the bed.

Amelia raises her hands, looking at the card, and sees that her arms and hands have been marked with a sharpie with dotted lines as if they are going to be cut open for surgery.

The doctor has 6 bottles of pills on the table next to the bed. Each one is marked with some sort of symbol in the style of the tarot cards.

AMELIA

Listen... do you have anything in there that will make this fucking stop?

She tries to grab at the pills, but the doctor grips her wrist tightly and forces her back onto the bed.

DOCTOR

Take your medicine...

The doctor tries to shove the pills into her mouth (or maybe a syringe?? Idk we will see what we can find)...

Amelia struggles against the pills being forced into her mouth. She rolls off the bed. There are other horrifying visuals of the doctor.

AMELIA (V.O.)

And there I was, making a futile attempt to back out of the horrors of my own making.

Amelia crawls across the floor. She rips off the hospital gown to reveal her original clothes are underneath it.

AMELIA (V.O.)

I knew when I started that the ticket was one way and the destination was not up to me.

9

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

9

Amelia is crouched over the toilet, trying to make herself throw up the pills. She coughs and tears run down her face.

Music begins to crackle from a speaker behind her. Amelia turns around to see the final tarot card fluttering to the ground in front of her. It reads "SANITY", but is placed upside down.

AMELIA

Finally...

She looks up slowly and sees... herself dressed in white like she's in a cult. ALTERNATE AMELIA holds a cassette player that is plugged into the wall.

ALTERNATE AMELIA

It's time.

Amelia picks up the card and stands up to face herself.

AMELIA (V.O.)

Time for what?

It didn't matter. Who was I to argue?

Alternate Amelia gestures to the bath. There is a rushing noise and the tub fills in reverse, coming out of the drain. The large American flag from before has been hung in place of the shower curtain.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A flashback to Amelia's friends. They light sparklers on the beach and drink happily. They play in the water.

Amelia is still sitting in the chair, blankly staring ahead. She holds the deck of cards.

She puts the cards in her pocket and stands up.

AMELIA (V.O.)

And here we are. Another mismatched set of refugees worn down by the echo of the American dream.

And somehow half a century later we're still acting surprised when the happiness and content that we are told to feel gives way to emptiness.

Amelia takes the American flag from the pole and wraps it around her shoulders. She sets off along the beach alone.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amelia sits, fully clothed in the bathtub. She is holding the sanity card, still upside down, and lets it float on the water in front of her.

AMELIA (V.O.)

Is it better to stand shamelessly indignant at the lies that we force-feed each other? Or to acquiesce and stifle the glimpses of our true selves that peer pathetically through the bars of the cage that we lock them in...

The music builds up. Alternate Amelia stands next to the bath and holds the tape recorder, still plugged in, over the water.

Amelia closes her eyes.

We see Alternate Amelia's hand release the cassette recorder in slow motion.

There is a large splash. The music cuts out.

Amelia opens her eyes. Her alternate self is gone, as is the tape recorder. She is still sitting fully clothed in the bath and a bunch of grapefruits bob around her in the water.

12 INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

12

Amelia sits at the table. The McDonalds is still there. Amelia absentmindedly takes a fry and eats it.

The tarot cards are still on the table. Amelia shuffles them and then lays them out face down.

AMELIA (V.O.)

Why think for yourself? Choose a predetermined identity, choose a cause, it doesn't matter which one. Just shuffle the cards.

Amelia lays out a single card in the centre face-up. It reads "THE END".