

Our Americano

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An apple pie Americano – attaboy! – got the ax for being asleep at the switch and back talking his backasswards ball-busting boss. Though our Americano was a bit of a blowhard, he wasn't a bad egg. His being bagged by his boss made him feel like he had belly-flopped in his birthday suit. Basically, he was over a barrel, with the bejesus knocked out of him, and no matter how hard he beat his brains out, he remained betwixt and between. What if he was a bozo bullshit artist who couldn't see the big picture? Maybe, he thought, he should bootlick, belly up to his big shot of a boss. He sat in the can thinking about being canned. He decided he was no comma-counter, no company man. He chug-a-lugged a beer and chowed down Chinese. His chips being so down led him to the cat-house where he carried a torch for a cat's meow call girl named Nicole who could do one crazy cement mixer. Though he wasn't her cup of tea, the cutie pie didn't give him the cold shoulder. Instead, she cased out his dick and poured him a double, which made him feel less like a dead duck. After his night out, he was dead broke, a desperado divvy-ing up his double-decker sandwich. He had one last chance – his hot diggity demo he took to a doosy of a deejay in a dinky a.m. station. The deejay said, "You're no dreamboat, but you sound damn fine." Our Americano knew these were his dog days, but he was an

eager beaver on the eighty-eight. He hoped elbow grease and an Elvis haircut could get him to Easy Street, but meanwhile he moved into a flea trap flophouse full of fancy pants and floozies. He took forty winks and dreamed of being the filthy rich, fashion plate, fair-haired boy who finagled a fast buck with his forty-five. His fans were finger poppers who flipped their lids whenever they heard his name. He liked living in a fishbowl where he could futz around in a five-and-dime and –

gee whiz! – googals of gussied-up glamour girls would go ga-ga. He'd take a gander at their great gams, then make goo-goo eyes – each one would have Nicole's face, giving him the go ahead. He was on a gravy train, his groovy gold star gimmick a gas. Then the gall! His god-awful alarm clock and the realization his dream was a gag gift. He was back to being a greenhorn again, a goose egg, a goof off, a goon. He was back to the grind, a hayseed, a half-assed horse's ass, a hack. A hammy ham-and-egger in hand-me-downs who'd had it, who'd have to pass the hat in hopes that highfalutin hoity-toity higher-ups who lived high on the hog would have a heart and give him a hand out. He needed a head shrinker for his hang ups, a head hunter who was also a hot sketch. If only he could get a job as a hubba hubba heart-throb. His hell hole apartment was giving him the heebie-jeebies. Just when he was thinking that maybe he should

ixnay the ivory thumper dream and iron out things with his icky former boss, the deejay called to say that our Americano was in like Flynn, the he was the new "it boy." He hit the jackpot. Jail bait Janes and Joe Colleges alike were jazzed up over the

jingle-jangle of his forty-five. He owed it all to the deejay, the jim-dandy who saw the jism in his jitterbug. No longer Joe Blow, no longer John Doe, our Americano jumped off the deep end and put his John Hancock on a contract agreeing to jazzy jam sessions and keeping up with the Jones. He traded in his jalopy for a Jaguar with a jazzy radio and jiffy power steering – the whole kit and caboodle. He was suddenly kingpin. Kids from Kentucky to Kazoo were keen for his new

LP, the one where he lollygagged like a lover-boy on the cover, a long drink of water turned into a lone-wolf lady's man by his agent. Loudmouth lounge lizards, love birds, letches, and low-lifers on the lam all lollygagged and learned the lingo of our live-wire loco Americano.

Madison Avenue masterminded a memo to make sure he was the make-out artist on Main Street, the man-about-town on every main drag, the Real McCoy, Mister Right. Even his mishugana mumsy was mad about his moxie. Martooni in hand, our Americano wanted to mooch, to make it with his main squeeze before he was slipped a Mickey Finn, before the mud-slinging that went along with the monkey business of stardom began. He went back to the

notch-house he went to as a nobody from noplacerville, took a number, waiting along with the other nudniks, and asked for Nicole. Nope, they said, no-dice. No- good Nicole was nixed for taking a nosedive, for using needle candy. The nervy madam said, "What about Nina? Nancy? Noel?" "No!" said our heartbroken Americano. "Don't knock it," said the madam, "don't be so nit-picky," using her noggin, thinking about her nest egg. But only

Nicole was our Americano's
 oomph girl, his one and only, the only one he could open up to, the
 only one on his one-track mind. He searched for her in oodles of
 off-beat streets. It was like someone had given him a one-two
 punch when he heard she'd O.D.'ed. He drank one too many on-
 the-house drinks. Fans gave him the once-over, but he was out to
 lunch. His friend the deejay gave him a
 pep talk then, as a picker-upper, took him to a peep show where pin
 up girls in plunging necklines polished off Dom Perignon. He was
 a party pooper besieged by posh party girls who tried to get palsy-
 walsy, but our Americano pleaded the fifth. Even though his next
 pop song was panned, his agent, a phonus bolonus, assured him
 he was popular in passion pits everywhere, the prez of the post-
 Elvis look, page-one news. Our Americano now dreamed of his
 pencil-pushing days, dreams in which his pink slip never came
 and he was
 quick on the uptake, giving every job the quick-over, stopping for a
 quick one at the bar on his way home to a
 run-of-the-mill rundown ranch house where Nicole would be roasting
 a roast. He missed the rat race, the rinky-dink rubber checks, rub-
 bing elbows with the rowdy and raunchy. His mother pulled rank
 and told him he had rocks in his head, that he just needed a little
 R and R, and a red hot mamma to help him to stop rehashing
 Nicole. He needed razzle-dazzle razzmatazz, the red carpet.
 "Stop being such a sad sack," she said. "Your setbacks are small pota-
 toes, smidgen- sized snafus. Savor your salad days, your saddle
 shoes, your sass and savvy say-so, your Shangri La where you
 shake a wicked calf. You go stag to shindigs and shimmy with sex

pots. You've earned your sheep-skin in slap-happy sashaying and super-duper star-gazing. And don't forget your stand-out smash hit that gives the girls the screaming meemies! I know I'm no spring chicken, but I'm not from Squaresville either. I know the scoop, and I know the score. Don't be a screw up! Don't be a sap! I'm not going to sugarcoat it, son, you're a swellelegant somebody, the only chance I have left for a sugar daddy!" And with that, she skedaddled from the soap opera of our Americano's life. He

took five to take it all in, his tear-jerker of a life in 3-D. His mother's two cents' worth of a tailor-made third degree was just the ticket that made him realize he was being a tightwad with his talent. He went to Tin Pan Alley where he wrote tip-top, top notch torch songs for Nicole, his departed tart.

Umpteen undergrads – uppity, cool and uncool alike – threw undies and other unmentionables as our Americano sang, a real Valentino, a V.I.P. who made vamps of wallflowers with his wails and wiggle. He gave his weepies their walking papers, and soon he was the water-cooler talk of Wisenheimers and windbags. Women wolf-whistled at him. He made whoopee with one wiry wham bam thank-you-ma'am who became his wonderful wife. He had the wherewithal, wads of what it takes, the

x-factor. In fact, his x marked the spot. Our Americano was an example to yakety-yack yes-men everywhere. He inspired a zillion Zen hipsters, zoot suiters, and zazoos with his zing, zazzle, and zowie.