

The following vignette was inspired by a series of e-mails on Steelewatchers. One thread concerned the cover art for the hopefully-soon-to-be -released Remington Steele Season 1 DVD. If they really go with what's at <http://www.tvshowsondvd.com/newsitem.cfm?NewsID=3228> , they will be pushing an image that matches James Bond, not Remington Steele, and they will be leaving Laura Holt off the cover completely. Needless to say, certain members of SteeleWatchers expressed strong disapproval. I pointed out that if one could step back from the situation, it did have a humorous side: Laura Holt always kept herself out of the publicity limelight, and she actively created a public image of Remington Steele that didn't quite match the reality of the man who would be Steele. The other thread that is part of the warp and woof of this story concerns the ongoing discussion of whether Pierce Brosnan will play James Bond in the next film. In this past week, early April 2005, people have posted newspaper articles announcing two different non-PB actors as officially being the next JB, which those actors later denied, and also articles about how PB is still very much in the run, that his previous announcement that he was out is just a ploy.

Leon is a character from the episode "Steele on the Air." He played a press agent who was trying to get Steele on the cover of "People."

Bonded Steele

by Peg Daniels

Early April 2005, L.A., offices of Remington Steele Investigations

Remington looked at the jewel case in his hand. He cringed at the cover art on its liner. When Leon had cajoled him into this deal – not that Leon had had to do much arm-twisting – Remington hadn't given much thought to the possible fallout. It promised to be nuclear. “Uh, Leon. This isn't exactly the Remington Steele image.” Laura would not be pleased. Particularly considering that she was noticeable on the cover only by her absence. Then again, the only person who would notice that would be Laura, since she still insisted on staying in the background where publicity was concerned. Oh, and *he* had noticed she wasn't on there, of course. It'd taken him awhile. He'd had a vague, nagging feeling that something was missing. He'd finally put one and one together: Nag + Missing From Picture = Laura.

Not that his dear sweet wife was a nag. Except when it came to pestering him about paperwork or fussing about him fobbing off footwork on Mildred or . . . Well, it didn't matter. This little

bombshell was sure to wipe out all memory of his past transgressions.

“Steele, baby, what’s the prob?”

“We-e-ell,” Remington drawled. “For one thing I look like a steely-eyed, cold-blooded killer – ”

“Steele, it’s now, it’s happenin’, babe – ”

“*What’s happenin’, babe?*” Laura stood at the entrance to the office, glaring.

Remington whipped the hand holding the jewel case behind his back. He winced at her tone: she and Leon had never exactly . . . hit it off. He winced one more time when he realized something could very well be hit off in the next few minutes, and it wasn’t Leon and Laura’s relationship. He decided the best defense was a good –

He sprinted over to her, still holding his hand behind his back. “Ah, Laura, I was just in a little confab with Leon – ”

“Oh, you were, were you?”

Remington cleared his throat nervously and continued, “Yes.” He turned his head toward Leon, away from her dagger eyes. “Uh, Leon, you remember my lovely wife?”

“What’s shakin’, sweetheart?”

“What’s – ?” Laura took a deep breath. “The name isn’t ‘sweetheart.’ It’s Laura Holt-Steele.”

“Doesn’t exactly roll trippingly off the tongue, does it?”

Remington rushed to intervene before Laura could *rip* out someone’s tongue – he moved especially fast because he wasn’t sure if said tongue would be his or Leon’s. “Leon’s had the most marvelous idea – ”

“I bet.”

“Uh, yes, he has indeed. Only I realized I need the input of my most valuable, most trusted – ”

“What’s behind your back?”

“ – most *forgiving*, uh, behind my back, you say? Why, Laura,” – he limned a lascivious leer on his lips – “you are *intimately* familiar with what’s behind my back, but in case you need a little reminder, what say you and I go out to Pierre’s tonight. We’ll have a romantic dinner, go out dancing, and then we’ll go home and . . . dance.” He made bedroom eyes, hoping he looked like whatshisname in *The Thomas Crown Affair* (Rene Russo, Irish DreamTime, 1999).

“*What’s behind your back?*”

Evidently she was not in the mood. Maybe it was a PMS thing. “Uh, nothing, darling, really.” She began to tussle with him, trying to pull his arm to the front. “Can’t keep her hands off me,” Remington assured Leon. Remington’s eyes went wide when he saw Leon had a digital camera out and was taking pictures of them.

“Great stuff, Steele. Animal passion between secretary and boss – ”

“*Secretary?*” Laura shrieked. She stomped on Remington’s foot, which he thought was definitely a display of misplaced anger – that is, he had that thought when the explosions behind his eyeballs finally ceased and he could think again. He nearly lost the jewel case to her, but in a sleight-of-hand move worthy of Houdini (Tony Curtis, Janet Leigh, Paramount Pictures, 1953), he managed to transfer it to his left hand and launch it through the air to Leon, who caught it deftly.

“Yeah, great stuff. If nowhere else we can put it in the Special Features – Deleted Scenes.”

Laura turned around slowly, dangerously, to face Leon. “*What* are you talking about?”

“You’re going to love it, sweetheart,” Leon affirmed. Remington practically did jumping jacks to get Leon’s attention, making “cut” gestures at his throat, grabbing his tie and pretending to hang himself – all to no avail. Leon swept a palm across the air, inviting his audience to share his vision. “Remington Steele’s Greatest Cases on DVD, Volume I.” Leon held up the jewel case in a triumphant fist, giving Laura her first look at the cover art. Remington collapsed against the desk.

Moments later, Remington realized he still hadn’t heard anything. Had Laura screamed so loud she’d ruptured his eardrums? He looked up cautiously. Oh, Lord, she was building up to it. Dante’s Peak came to mind (whoshisface, Linda Hamilton, Universal Pictures, 1997). He sprang forward and clamped a hand over her mouth. “Leon, I need to talk this over with my staff – ouch!” – Remington backed his feet away from Laura’s lethal heels, which gave him a decidedly precarious lean – “my partner. I’m sure we can come to some agreement on this issue. I think maybe even a *tiny* inset picture might be satisfactory – ”

“Steele, face it. Ms. Holt-Steele here ain’t exactly Salma Hayek – ”

“Mmph, mmph, mmph – ”

“What’s that, darling?” Remington shifted his hand to a firmer position. He usually quite enjoyed it when she bit him, but he had a feeling her current efforts weren’t attempts at little love nips.

“Mmmmmm”

“This guy here,” – Leon pointed to the steely-eyed, cold-blooded assassin on the cover art – “needs to be dripping with hot babes.”

“MMMMMM”

“Steele, baby, you and the Laurster work this out, get back to me, okay? Gotta fly – I’m meeting Pierce Brosnan, plot out his next career move now that his Bond days are kaput. Don’t know if the guy’s salvageable, but Anyway,” – Leon dipped his knees and cut the air with his hand – “ciao.” He swaggered from the room.

Laura tried to follow, her muffled vocalizations growing ever more strident. Between trying to hold her back and keeping his feet out of range, Remington overbalanced, and they toppled to the floor.

“Will you get off of me?”

“Not until I’m sure Leon’s safely out of the building. And then, only if I can’t persuade you otherwise.”

Remington was engaged in some hot and heavy petting with Laura when the telephone rang. “Damn! If that’s Mildred –” He reached over the side of the bed toward the nightstand and –

– fell onto the floor. Dazed, he sat up. Ah, yes. He hadn’t been in his bed. He hadn’t been making passionate love with Laura. He’d been relegated to the sofa for the past two weeks, and evidently he’d been kissing his pillow. The one point reality and dream agreed upon was that the phone was ringing.

He got onto his feet, but could barely straighten up. The sofa needed replacing, even if Laura’s smirks seemed to imply his back pains from sleeping on it had nothing to do with the sofa and everything to do with his age. Pure nonsense. Why, he could show that new actor slated to play James Bond a thing or two.

He hobbled over to the phone. “Steele here. . . . Yes. . . . Oh? . . . Oh. Yes, I see. Veered to the left again. Well, thanks anyway, Leon. . . . Yes, ciao to you, too.” Remington replaced the phone and slumped onto the sofa.

“What did Leon have to say?”

“What? Oh, good morning, Laura.” She was standing behind the sofa. She put a hand on his shoulder, then ruffled his hair. He looked up at her, and they held each other’s gaze. She leaned down and kissed him soundly. He took her hand. “Does this mean I’m forgiven?”

“Have you made your penance?”

“Penance is voluntary. My privations were imposed.” He tugged on her hand and half-led, half-pulled her around the sofa until she was seated next to him. He put his arm around her shoulders,

and they leaned back together against the sofa. She splayed a hand on his bare chest and began to play with the hairs there. He kissed the top of her head.

“So, what did Leon have to say.”

“Well, apparently it still may happen that Pierce Brosnan will play Bond.”

“So?”

“So, apparently somebody thinks I resemble him.”

“That’s ridiculous. You’re much better looking.”

“Thank you, darling. I always thought so.”

“I still don’t get what this has to do with what you and Leon were scheming.”

“Scheming? Laura, that’s so, so – ”

“Accurate?”

“Accusatory. One man’s scheming is another man’s – ”

“Way of life?”

“Why do I get the feeling I’d better go sofa-shopping today?”

Laura laughed. A delightful, melodic laugh, full of love. He knew he was forgiven, once again. He would show her how much she meant to him. He cupped her face in his hands and planted little kisses on her freckles, intending to rediscover each and every one. Then he’d move to the freckles on her shoulders, and then on her –

“Mr. Steele.”

Remington moved his lips away from her skin with great reluctance. “Yes?” he managed to gasp out.

“We have our first appointment in less than two hours, and you haven’t begun your grooming routine yet.”

“We’ll be late.” He sank toward her again.

She tilted another laugh and gently pushed on his chest. “No can do.”

Remington closed his eyes. “Oh, Laura,” he moaned, trying to convey maximum need of her.

“But I’ll make it up to you tonight.”

His eyes snapped open. “Promise?”

“Promise.”

“Will you wear that little – ”

She put her fingers to his lips. “I’ll wear very little.”

He grinned, leapt up from the sofa, and whistled a tune as he strutted toward the shower, feeling young.

“Mr. Steele.”

He stopped in mid-toot. “Yes?”

“What did your mild resemblance to Pierce Brosnan have to do with anything?”

“Oh. Well, apparently the producers of the Bond films got hold of the proposed DVD’s cover art you saw and accused Leon of ripping off Brosnan’s James Bond image. If we go forward with the project, they’re going to sue our backsides off.”

“It’d be a shame for you to lose your backside.”

Remington turned around so his silk pajama clad backside was facing Laura and looked over his shoulder at it. “Think so?”

“Definitely. One of your best assets.”

Remington grinned at her and continued to whistle a merry melody for much of that day.

But that night, he played a lovers’ duet with Laura.

The End

For anyone who missed the reference, at the end of “Steele on the Air” when “People Magazine” is no longer interested in Steele, Leon remarks to Steele, “You approached greatness, and then you veered left.”

Thanks to test audience Debra Talley, supportive friend, for her comments and the suggestion that

Dante's Peak fit.

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