

SPIES IN THE OILSANDS: WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

As Performed at the Calgary One-Act Play Festival, March 9, 2007

Preshow: Songs about Alberta.

Joker: We are the Gamer Players. What we are presenting for you is not traditional theatre. It's interactive theatre based on Forum Theatre and what we're going to do is pose a question. We don't have the answer, nor do we espouse an answer. We're exploring an issue that is pertinent to Alberta right now and we'd like to have a dialogue with you to see if we can find a path to go on. We hope you will play with us and indulge this experiment. We're going to present this a couple of times and when you watch it this first time, just watch it with critical thought and places maybe where the whole story isn't coming out. Maybe there are some other perspectives that need to be heard?

Video begins. Timecode: 00. Truck rumble sfx.

AJ: *(Tapping at the keyboard.)* Man, I'm not getting an image anywhere. She's not going to like this. Okay, AJ, Breathe. And go for a walk. *(Looks out window)* Yes, go for a walk out there which is just mud and shit. Not like the coast. What am I doing here? *(looks at the screen)* Damn. I'm getting something. Something's coming in. It's all over the place, there's no focus. *(Reaches for a book)* Like my instructor always said, if you don't know what's going on, read the manual. *(Reads book)*. Long-eared owls. *(Looks at cover)* Birds of the bo-real forest. *(Reaches for another book)* Coordinates seem right. *(Hollers)* Hey, Tarzana. Tarzana could you come here for a second? The coordinates are all over the map.

Tarzana: *(To offstage buddies)* Don't forget you guys, you owe me money on that Oilers pool. Yeah, see you later. I gotta help out this new kid. He's pretty green. *(Walks to the door, stamps her boots. Turnstakes a drag of her cigarette.)*

Tarzana: I love the smell of bitumen in the morning.

Tarzana: Geez AJ. I thought you knew how to work this system. What did they teach you at NAIT? You're all over hell's half acre out here...Yer bird's way all over the fuckin' place.

AJ: Bird? What do you mean?

Tarzana: The satellite. With the camera on it for taking pictures? Nudge her alittle further south. Ah, yes, the paydirt. The Alberta Oilsands. The engine that drives our economy.

AJ: It's still a little fuzzy. What are we taking these shots for anyway?

Tarzana: For the boss's annual report cover. We need a sexy smokestack picture. 100% Emissions free. Makes the shareholders feel all warm and fuzzy. Investors too. There's \$110 billion of development on the books around here and somebody's gotta pay for it. You know? Our Boss made \$6.5 billion profit last year.

AJ: 6.5 billion dollars? That's a lot of jobs..

Tarzana: You bet. Let's see, if you lined 6.5 billion in hundred dollar bills end to end, they'd stretch all the way to heaven. Well at least from here to fucking Timbuktu ... and back. And that's the Alberta Advantage.

AJ: We should form a republic. *(Looks at screen)* Look, we're getting a fairly good shot here. What's this? A little lake? Not far from here?

Tarzana: Oh yeah, a lake eh? Right. *(Laughs)* That's a tailin' pond. You jump in that and your balls will melt right off your body. That's the water they use to boil the oil out of the bitumen. I hear the Circle 8 in Fort Mac has a new hot tub. Wanna try it out?

(Restart the video)

We need to come in lower.

AJ: It's so, what, smokey.

Tarzana: Ignore the smoke. It's the cost of doing business.

AJ: Okay. Nice clean target coming into range. Clean as a whistle. What're chances of that!?!??

Tarzana: Holy shit, Boss'll love it. That's the smokestack we're looking for. Oh, oh oh oh

AJ: Yes yes yes. Getting closer ...

Together: Yes. Tighter. Yeah.

HIGH FIVE IMAGE.

TOGETHER: AHHHHH. The money shot.

Pause Video Timecode 01:50

Tarzana sits, rolls the chair back. Rolls a smoke.

Terra enters, crosses the room

Terra: Tarzana, oh my god, you're leaving your truck running. How many times have I told you to turn your truck off??

Tarzana: Where did you come from?

Terra: You know what that's doing to the environment? Besides, it's illegal to leave your truck idling.

Tarzana: *(Smokes)* Know what the matter is with you environmentalists? You're cramping our style around here. Standin in the way of progress. Scientists say ... Glaciers? Gettin thicker, not melting. National Post says there are more polar bears than ever. Weather fucks up every couple a hundred years, nothin we can do about it. Yeah yeah. The environment. *(spins in the chair.)* bla bla bla bla bla bla bla.

AJ and Terra stare at Tarzana for a few moments.

(Tarzana bizzies herself smoking.)

AJ.: Hi, my name is AJ.

(Shakes hands with Terra)

You're the cook, eh?

Terra: Yeah. I'm the cook. So, you're new here hey?

AJ: Yeah, well I've been here a couple of weeks, but still learning the ropes.

AJ: Yeah there's this book about birds of the Bo-real forest.

Terra: *(Grabs the book)* Yup, that's it. Take a look at it?

AJ: Well I had a look at the owl section. You know what? These birds used to live out there. *(Points at window.)* You look out there, there's nothing. There's no forest. They're ripping down the forest so they can make all their oil and gas and all of their money. You know I actually marked all the pages of the birds that don't actually live here anymore. You know that? I think you should read a little more about it. *(Slams the book into his chest)* Take the book.

AJ: Yeah sure. I'll take a look...

Tarzana: *(To AJ)* You hungry? *(To Terra)* You bring us sandwiches for us?

Terra: Dream on. I'm the cook, not the waitress.

Tarzana: Come on let's go get lunch.

AJ: Your truck or mine?

Tarzana: Take min, she's all warmed up. See, lucky I kept her runnin'. Way easier on the ignition.

Terra: Drive??!! Nonnonono, you're not taking the truck. The kitchen is 50 metres away.

Tarzana: Grab yer boots. Get in the fucking truck.

Terra: Get out of that truck. Get out of that fucking truck right now.

Tarzana and AJ get in the truck. Terra blocks their way. Truck revving sfx.

Terra: I can't believe this. *(Starts singing Koombaya)*.

AJ: Geez Tarzana you're going to run her over??!!

Tarzana: Nah, she always gets out of the way every time.

AJ: You're not going to drive over her are you?

Tarzana: Ah. She gets out of the way every time.

Terra: I will bring you your sandwiches.

Tarzana: Easy on the tofu, cookie.

Terra: *(Stomping off)* I have to do everything around here. Bring sandwiches, Save the environment.

(AJ and Tarzana get out of the truck)

AJ goes in and Tarzana stays at the door of the shack.

Tarzana: I'm just goin to finish my butt.

AJ: I'll go grab my chew.

Tarzana: Come on back out and enjoy the scenery.

AJ: Hey Tarzana. Have you seen my chew?

Tarzana: Box under the desk I think.

AJ: *(Pulls an old milk container out of a hockey bag)* Aaah stinks!

Tarzana grinds out her cigarette and goes back in the shack.

Tarzana: Last guy musta left it. Get rid of it. *(Throws it out the door.)*

AJ: Yucck. *(Grimaces)*

Tarzana: What?! It's made of oil. It'll go back to the earth.

(AJ takes out an old orange and plops it on the desk.)

Tarzana: Here's my old hat!

AJ: *(Pulls the game out)* Software. Maybe I can use it to control the bird.

Start Video 01:50

Tarzana Pulls out a water bottle and uncaps it smells it.

Tarzana: Cleverly disguised ... *(smells)* Just as I thought. *(Drinks)* Skreetch. The guy was a Newfie, alright. Naughty naughty, this is a dry camp. *(Hands it to AJ)*

AJ: *(Takes a swig)* *That's * why Fort Mac is such a piss up all the time.

Oh shit. The bird. The bird. *(He lunges back to the computer.)*

Tarzana: Don't panic. Come for a lesson. Ther's the Bow River. Boss's bird homed us in to Calgary head office. Back her up, swing her north. Northern Alberta. Here's Fort Mac.

AJ: This looks like Google Earth.

Tarzana. Where do you think Google gets their pictures? Let her hover. Here are the original projects. Suncor has been here since 1967. They're on both sides of the river. Got all the water they need. Here's Syncrude. Biggest mine in the world. Petro-Canada's here too. Up river now. Here we are. Here's us. Boss wants to put in nuclear plants around here. Nice and clean, especially now that the kaboom factor is under control. Neighbours? Global energy giants. Encana's down south a bit but here Shell, Canadian Natural Resources, Esso, Husky, JapanCanada ...

AJ: The Americans here?

Tarzana: American money, Chinese, German, Korean ... But, you're right, Uncle Sam in the middle of it all.

AJ:I heard there's as much oil here as in all of Saudi Arabia.

Tarzana: Easy. Difference is, costs those Saudi's like 50 cents a barrel to get their oil out of the ground. Costs us like almost 50 bucks. Lord have mercy if prices fall.

(Looks at screen) We're flying in surprisingly low now. Does this look familiar?

AJ: World's biggest trucks out to haul the world's stinkiest paydirt. What's that green pipeline?

Tarzana: No clue.

AJ: There's our shack. There's my truck. There's yours.

Tarzana: Hey Butch and Super Dave. He owes me money.

AJ: Look, there's Terra coming back with lunch

Tarzana: Hmmmm!

Stop Video:

Terra stomps in with a wicker basket and takes off her boots and hardhat.

Terra: All right, I brought you your lunch. Here ya go. Couple of sandwiches. There ya are AJ. Tarzana, here. Now I'm sure you don't really care but I actually travelled up to Spirit River to get these eggs to make egg salad sandwiches. That's right. I buy everything within a hundred kilometres of where I actually live. It's true. Yup.

(Terra reaches down, picks up the orange off the desk and thrusts it in AJ's face?)

What's this?

AJ: An Orange.

Terra: *(To Tarzana)* What's this?

Tarzana: Orange?

Terra: Yeah. An orange. It's probably your orange, eh? You feel you need some oranges up here in the Alberta oilsands, right? You know what's going on right now in California? It's freezing. Then it's boiling then it's freezing then it's boiling. But you feel you need to fly a whole cart of oranges up here. You know how much fuel is used to get this fuckin' orange to you so you can eat your sweet orange? It's killing the environment and that is why we don't eat oranges!

(AJ and Tarzana look at her stunned. Terra plunks down a container of nuts.)

Here's your fuckin' nuts too.

Tarzana: (*Wadding up a paper bag and throwing it on the ground*). Wind the girl up and off she goes.

Terra: (*Picking up the bag*). Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.

(*Terra reaches down, picks up the game package off the desk and thrusts it in Tarzana's face?*)

What's this?

Tarzana: Software.

Terra: (*To AJ*) What's this?

AJ: Software?

Terra: Figures. You don't know. I'll just take it with me here. I'll get out of your way. You can do your important work.

AJ: Hey, wait a second. We found that in the bag here. That's ...

Tarzana: You get back here. That's our software.

Terra: This is not your software. It's mine and it's a computer game.

AJ: A game??

Terra: A game, you wouldn't get it. (*Packing up to leave*)

AJ: Why don't you show us and we can decide that for ourselves.

Terra: You know what? It think it's a little too complicated for you.

AJ: Come on show us. We like games.

Tarzana: Yeah, yeah. I like games ...

Terra: You wanna try it?

AJ: Yeah, I'll try your game.

Terra: (*Thrusting the game at AJ*). You can install my software.

AJ: Okay. Where do I stick it? In the hole dumbass.

Terra: Okay get rid of that Tarzana. Get rid of that shit on the screen. Hurry up we don't have all day.

Terra: All right out of the way. Out of the way. Here let me show you how this works.
(Bumps Tarzana out of the chair.)

(Loads game Play Table F8 a bunch of times, F5, F7. Play game 5-1-Enter.)

Terra: Okay this is called The Pipeline Pinball Energy Thrill Ride Game. Load up level number one The Alberta Gamble. Now while this is loading up, you'll see everyone who is interested in the oilsands is on the pinball game. Oilthirsty USA Russia Canada China India, they're all there. It's like any other pinball game you try to get points, right? These points? World demand and CO2 emissions.

AJ: Are they linked up.

Terra: Well yeah. As world demand goes up, CO2 emissions go up. But CO2 emissions, as you'll notice, will go up way faster. And that is exactly what is contributing to our climate change. There you see that. We're getting these points. We're getting these points. Pretty predictable eh?

AJ: Sorry but yeah, it's kinda boring.

Terra: Yeah, it's kinda boring. But, if you get to level 2, this is where it gets really interesting. Generate Energy Diversity. This is where you can actually open up alternative energy targets. Then you can get all these alternative energy points. You know, renewable resources.

AJ: Renewable resources. What's that?

Terra: You don't know what renewable resources are!?

AJ: Well, my libido is a renewable energy.

Terra: (Stands up) Yeah, you think you're so funny. (pause)

Terra: You know, renewal resources. Like solar power, you get energy from waves, it's energy that doesn't emit crap into the air that's heating up our world and killing us all. It's people who leave their trucks idling and all the gas is coming out and the CO2 emissions are coming out and the sea levels rise and people who live on islands have to leave there islands because they're going to drown. Vancouver Island is not going to exist in 20 years. AND THAT IS WHY WE DO NOT DRIVE TRUCKS! (pause)

Terra: I ride a BIKE!

AJ: *(Hands her the ice tea bottle)* Screech?

(In the meantime Tarzana taps away at the level two game.)

Terra: *(Takes a drink and looks at the bottle)* Ahh. Ethanol. Ethanol. We should be using ethanol. But no, no, that won't make us any money.

AJ: So, if you don't like what's going on all around us, then why are you up here?

TERRA: I'm here to save people. Do you want to be saved?

AJ: Do you do it missionary style?

TERRA: I'm here to save people.

AJ: Do you do it missionary style?

Terra: All right come over here, Come over here. Look out the window. What do you see?

AJ: Well, Mud.

Terra: Back there. What are those tall things?

AJ: The stacks.

Terra: Yeah. The smokestacks. What's coming out of it.

AJ: Well, Smoke.

Terra: Where's that smoke going?

AJ: To the sky?

Terra: It doesn't disappear. It stays right here. It stays in our atmosphere. And it's contributing to so much crap. And then eventually you won't be able to have kids, you're not going to be able to live on this land. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to go up into the forest, I'm going to live on a farm and I'm going to plant my own fruits and vegetables. I'm going to harvest my own land. I'm going to eat my own fruits and vegetables. I'm going to tread so lightly on this earth, no one will ever even know I existed. Yeah. *(To AJ)* Do you want to harvest my land with me? Do you want to eat my fruits? You know what? we don't need to keep raping Mother Earth.

Tarzana looks at them.

AJ: I've got hemp lip balm ...

TERRA: That's a start.

TARZANA: (*Holds up money, To AJ*) Hey AJ. Double or nothin yur paycheck I can whoop your ass at this game. I've got it figured out.

AJ: Yeah, Sign me up, I'm all for that. I mean, double or nothing, you serious? Why, cash I make outta this I can pay off my SUV and maybe put a down payment on a place. Maybe even ship some money back home to my parents. Yeah cool. (*To Terra*) All right, Granola girl. Show me how to play the game. It's your game after all.

Terra: Sure I'll show you how to play the game, I'll show you how to get all the alternative energy points.

TARZANA: Granola girl don't have a clue. Don't have a clue. See what you have to do ... You got fossil fuel points and you got alternative energy points. The idea is that you don't want to get your ball up into this green pipeline shoot or you open the stupid alternative energy targets. And you don't want that. You want to score fossil fuel points in the Oilsands.

TERRA: You want to get your balls up into that green pipeline because then those alternative energy targets open up. It's a little harder to begin with but it's worth it in the long run.

TERRA: Get it up! Get it in the pipeline!

TARZANA: Get it in the oilsands hole. Trillions of barrels and it's all ours!

AJ: Oh my balls are all everywhere. Get in the hole baby get in the hole. Yes! Yes! Well, whose side am I on here?

Terra; Well, Sustainability.

Tarzana: Progress.

Terra: Sustainability

Tarzana: Progress.

Terra: Sustainability

TERRA AND TARZANA: Whose side are you on??

END