



## A Night in Bimini Town ...

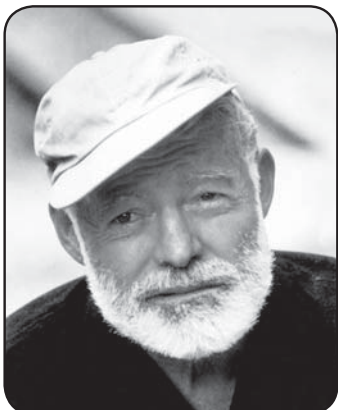
In December 1979 or 80, I found myself flying into Miami from San Francisco. Mark, my best friend, and I were sailing out of Dinner Key Marina on his 30' sloop, *Jahoma*, bound for Bimini, a small island in the Bahamas, 50 miles across the Atlantic Ocean as the crow flies. Due to the northerly 4 knot current of the Gulf Stream, the trip would be much longer as we could only sail 5 knots and our course would take us southwest instead of due west where Bimini Island lay. We set sail on a beautiful morning after loading our supplies the night before.



About three hours out, I decided to fire up the alcohol stove to prepare some coffee. As I primed the alcohol and lit the liquid, I noticed the blue flame arc downward and then, the whole stove was on fire. Not a good situation. Of course, I yelled to Mark, "Fire" and I grabbed the fire extinguisher near the stove and attempted to put it out. Mark took out his portable tape recorder and began a verbal dialogue about what was happening. One could never ask for a cooler customer in a panic situation. The fire

proved stubborn but with fits and starts it was extinguished and we sailed onward to our rendezvous with destiny.

It was late light when we reached the entrance to the harbor. The entrance was tricky, no radar, and the entrance was between a sandbar running parallel to the shoreline. We were to navigate the relatively deepwater channel between the bar and the shore. Dropping sail and



using the depth sounder we motored north up the channel with South Bimini to our starboard and into the main channel that separates North Bimini from South Bimini and tied up at the quay. Finally we lay secure at Alice Town, a small fishing village with some old hotels and a wild reputation for fishing, diving, drugs and all sorts of characters that ply these waters. And we were joining them. Oh, my!!



Being that the official immigration station was closed due to the late hour, we decided to explore and, of course, celebrate our safe passage. Went to the Compleat Angler (where Hemmingway use to hang out) and had a drink. Mark met some locals and decided to score some cocaine. As I watched him ride off on the back of a Vespa motor scooter, I went back inside to wait, drink and play this ring game with the tourists and locals. The visitors to the island were mostly white and the local Bahamians were all black with great accents-- "jah, mon". Had a couple of "hits" of the local ganja outside when Mark arrived with his "score".

On the way back to the boat, which wasn't very far, we spied a small, outside, round bar called Anita's and sat down at the bar with some people, a couple of fishermen and two hookers who just put their men asleep and stepped out for a drink.

Anita, the vibrant black bartender started pouring rum punches and we all started talking to each other. As we drank, we became sloppy, so we all agreed that the one who spilled the next drink would buy a round for all. Anita said, "*you have three of my rum punches and you will lose your mind.*" Rum was cheaper than orange juice on the islands. So it was a shot of rum and a splash of juice. Mark and I crawled away from the bar to his vessel.



It was a very cool cloudless December night in Bimini town. We were sitting on deck snorting some coke when Mark stood up and launched into his soliloquy about life. I must have passed out on deck because when I awoke I was alone and completely disoriented.

I walked off the boat and wandered around the quay not knowing where I was. A thin, very striking black lady with a scorpion tattooed to her upper arm approached me and asked where I was from. I told her I was from England and I didn't know where I was. She took me to her home and laid me down. I remember it was a hovel. I thought I was still on the boat and Mark had

transformed himself into this woman. She undressed me and we had sex. I guess I wasn't that far gone but all the while I was thinking how could I be doing this if this is Mark. *I was in bad shape !!*

After awhile, dawn was approaching and I asked her if she could direct me to the boat. She would she said but I needed to pay her for finding me and helping me. I signed over all my Traveler checks that I had and she took me back to

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*Hey England ..  
You OK, mon?*

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Jahoma, which wasn't very far and I staggered onto the boat and went down below. Mark was sleeping and I woke him and mumbled the story to him. He looked at me incredulously and told me to go to sleep. I passed out. About midday we were awakened by sharp knocking on the companionway steps. "Hey England, you OK, mon". There stood the Scorpion Lady. Mark and I just looked at each other. Welcome to Bimini -- Drake Regent