

## Update Bulletin

### Mayday!Exchange

March 7, 2003

Express Stone was over and done with a year ago. Stone II? Ancient history. Mr. Bellamy's FAX machine? Humming along nicely. The insanely great MarkeTechnics show: slid quietly under an ice floe somewhere in Dallas' West End. Finished. Ended. Complete. Deep breath.

Ahhh – time for a well-deserved break. Kick off my shoes and deal with the hundreds of unanswered bona-fide e-mails that are buried inside the thousands of electronic ads demanding immediate attention on my screen. Someone's always got a deal for you, so let's see what Microsoft brought me that I Want To Do Today:

- ☒ Oh! Here's something – make \$100,000 a year in my spare time stuffing envelopes in my own home. *Sweet!* [Delete] (I'm too busy.)
- ☒ And this one says I can clear \$100,000 a month disposing of BMWs and cigar boats that formerly belonged to RICO felons. Great, just what I need – from driver-protection to witness-protection in just one click. [Delete] (Too nervous.)
- ☒ Oooo! Oooo! **\$100,000 a week!** Guaranteed! Something about trading currency futures in Panama – “The government doesn't want you to know about these opportunities, but you can reach your dream of retiring on your own private Caribbean island in just three months!” Yeah, I'll bet. With Andy Fastow living next-door, drinks by the pool, lotsa laughs, a little poker with the other fifth-amendment capitalists on Thursday nights. Thank you very much, but I'll just try to make Centurion if it's all the same to you. [Delete] (Too smart.)
- ☒ And someone named Kathie wants me to ... wants me to *what?* [Delete] (Too bewildered.)

Then something turquoise invaded my peripheral vision. It was a pair of trousers. Felt. No kidding – it was real felt, like the kind you cut into shapes back in first grade and stuck on the felt-board. And boots – snakeskin boots with orange flames inlaid into the pointed toes like a NASCAR paint job. I didn't even have to look up to know it was Bernard.

I am relieved to be able to relate that he was wearing some kind of a shirt – actually, you'd have de-class it to the term “top,” and that only because it was worn north of the midsection, which itself was disconcertingly exposed. He is, after all, *Bernard*, not *Britney*.

I hadn't really expected to see him – last I'd heard he was on the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences payroll, lobbying his old White House friends to make sure the Iraq thing didn't go off before the Academy Awards and ruin its ratings. But it was clearly evident that Bernard's post-9/11 buzz-cut days were past. Gone was the Brooks Brothers suit, gone was the classic brown Hartmann, and Bernard's trademark aircraft aluminum Halliburton had returned. I took a deep breath and invited him to sit down.

“No time to sit down,” he warned. “It's *Mayday*.” He frowned deeply and meaningfully.

Now the last time I checked, even Bernard was continuing to use the Roman calendar, so I concluded that bizarre substances had altered his sense of time. “Bernard, I think we've got a couple of months until May Day.” But Bernard regarded me with a look of pained indulgence.

“No, child, not May Day, as in 1964 New York Times headline ‘Russia Shows Missile Muscle in Red Square May Day Parade.’ We're talking *Mayday*-Urgent! *Mayday*-potential disaster! *Mayday*-

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coming catastrophe! *Mayday* your grocers desperately need help so they won't get caught by the acronyms of mass-destruction. *Mayday* as in '*Mayday* DUKPT!' and '*Mayday* GTIN!' "

This was a new concept. I looked at him with an expression that was a little less convinced than he wanted to see. "Look-yoo," he continued. "De terminales inna de installa baze — dey lotsa DOS and the DOSsa no-go with the 14-a numerales inna Gee-Tinny Sunrise. You gots now?"

Of course he was right — there are thousands and thousands of TeamPoS 5000 terminals out there running ISS45 DOS that can't handle the new ISS45 WinPoS versions coming out with GTIN capability. GTIN comes in WinPoS only, meaning that there is going to be a whole lotta upgrading going on. Not to mention getting everyone up and running on Connected Services.

"They're in good shape compared to the other guys," Bernard said. "I've been checking ..." This always worried me, and I shot him a look — Bernard "checking" things is usually an ominous sign. "... I've been checking and you know, they can get this done with only a TeamPoS CPU upgrade. Everything else they keep using so we can make it pretty cheap."

"What do you mean, 'cheap'?"

"Work with me, Boyfriend, work with me. You don't charge for the upgraded ISS45 office they're going to need, so they're fine there, and they can even put WinPoS in the front end and they don't need new licenses for that either because you're so *nice* [cue Bernard pinching cheeks à la great aunt]. And even Windows comes now with the TeamPoS CPU. So we're done. Cheap, cheap, cheap. No new system, no new application, no new all-that-other-stuff."

I honestly didn't recollect that we were so benevolent.

"Oh yes, and of course this is the *ideal* time for them to take on the faster printers, snazzy new displays for better shopper service — gotta make 'em love your store, you know — and what about getting those 486SX boxes [cue Bernard wrinkling rather large nose] out of the office? And as long as you're in the store, time to hook 'em up for that Dashy-Boardy thing."

It's usually about this time in our brief conversations that I am once more given to understand exactly why Bernard is so highly paid and I am not. And why Management insists that we keep him around. And it's usually about this time that Bernard drops some bombshell program on my desk and vanishes. Right on schedule the bombshell appeared.

This time it was a big title that said "*Mayday!Exchange*" (italics his) written with that vintage '20s Parker Lapis Duofold fountain pen on his customary cream-laid Cranes Crest with a quickly drawn chart with trade-in numbers so generous that they made my eyes water. Seven hundred bucks a lane? And that's just what StoreNext pitches in?

I looked up, expecting to see that Bernard had departed. But he was still there: "You haven't asked me about business. I can't leave yet. You *know* you *always* ask me about business."

"OK, Fine. Here you go: so, Bernard — how's business at Chartreuse.com?"

"Fine, fine. Everything's fine. Sales: up. Profits: up. Stock: up. Practically runs itself. The big news is all about my new warm-weather retreat. Bought it just a couple weeks back. Gorgeous white sands, 26 acres, ocean breezes, palm trees, just a quick sail off St. Thomas and no dictators for a thousand nautical miles. Always wanted my own tropical island, remember?"

[Cue serious jealousy.] "So B. — big profits in mil-spec Chartreuse for cruise missile fuel?"

"Oh, heavens no," he gushed. "*Nothing* like that. This is much, *much* better — *absurdly* high yields in currency futures down in Panama. Didn't you get my e-mail? You *did* see my e-mail didn't you?"

To *Your* Success anyway,

**Tony**  
Antony van Leventer