

# The night the dollar *dropped*

By *Berwyn Lewis*

It was a nightmare! I was out in the boondocks recycling an old relationship, trying to re-invent the wheels, long after they'd fallen off, with "an ex". To this day, an "X" still marks the spot near the long-drop hole, better known as "the dunny".

My "ex" lives in a tropical paradise: glimpses of the ocean between rustling palms, blue skies, birds and myriad wildlife romping on the wide decks of his half-built mud-brick house. And therein lay the problem.

The wildlife at night was terrifying, especially for an arachnophobe like me. It was certain to lead to an encounter with a beady-eyed, furry-legged nocturnal creature.

I can still hear my ex's snort of contempt from the house, about 20 metres away, as trembling, torch in hand, daks around ankles, I screamed when something slithered on to my bottom.

Late one night my ex and I returned in a slightly legless state from a nearby casino. He headed off to the dunny, his wallet stuffed with the cash he'd won playing roulette, thousands of dollars, in the back pocket of his trousers.

I was inside the house, bracing myself for my turn in the loo when a blood-curdling curse rent the night. The wallet had dropped down the long hole.

In the dim torchlight we watched the wallet slowly sinking. "Grab the broom. No, something longer. A branch! Two branches!"

There was no time to take delicate sensibilities into account. We started fishing in the dark. His face, as he lay face down, was determination incarnate as he probed the depths of the long-drop

hole and managed to bring the wallet to the surface.

The contents were still intact, but they were not a pretty sight. The wallet was swarming with maggots.

We took it to the outside tap and washed the notes, one by one. We dried

them out with my hair-dryer. The wallet was consigned to the compost bin and, as for the cash, we had no trouble recycling that in unsuspecting retail outlets during the following days.

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