

"Mine Likes It When She Don't See Me"

by
Chris E. Gepp

Lights up:

On SIMON (mid-20s), skinny, modestly tattooed, with a tough demeanor, reclining back on a threadbare sofa wearing a wife-beater. While sipping from a chocolate milk carton, as the scene unfolds he attempts to haphazardly straighten up the living room, doing a rather piss-poor job. Nearby, Cartoon Network plays. A few children's toys litter the room.

SIMON

I get this call one day from the delivery company sayin' that that's it, no más. "What'd I do?" I wondered. Sure, there was that time I rolled the delivery truck over a dude's foot, but, hell, I said "sorry." And I did deal a little MJ to the employees from time to time, but everybody does that shit. It's a practically fucking legal activity now. I bet the fuckin' President smokes a bowl in the Oval Office when a head o' state or some shit is there and they got nothin' to talk about. "Wanna hit, Emir?" "Don't mind if I do, Señor Presidente."

Now with nothin' in my world other than my little four-foot-eleven-inch angry wife Rosa at home and considering me a worthless member of society, the only place I could feel, you know, like, I was worth more than a pile o' shit was down at the Lucky Lanes offa I-10. That night my bowling team The Doodoo Birds, we'd just kicked the crap out of the Trouser Snakes and, man, I damn near hit 200. Six pitchers of Bud Light Lime later and still buzzin' I'm out in the parking lot by the coche. It's hot, sweat's dripping into my eyes, and I realize, Christ's testicles, my keys is still danglin' inside the motherfuckin' car. And that's when I meet Herman.

I felt this gun pressin' against my side and hear this wheezy voice: "Don't move, Toothpick, or Henrietta might get upset."

"Who's Henrietta?" I say lookin' at this dude's reflection in my window. I'd never seen someone both pack a gun and an inhaler at the same time.

"My .38 Special, Curtain Rod. Now open the fuckin' door," Herman finishes after a hit off his inhaler.

"Cain't. Look," I point. Herman takes a look inside and then mutters, "Oh, fuck it. I can't drive a stick anyway," and starts to walk off.

"Mine Likes It When She Don't See Me"

"Man," I say, "You sure ain't much of a auto thief then. You might wanna rethink your present occupation." And Herman, his freckles all flarin' up now, turns around fast and gets up in my face, real irate, sayin' he tried drivin' one of them "stick things," but ended up drivin' off a boat dock instead.

What a dude: thick fuckin' glasses, no taller than Rosa, this red hair, wearin' a fishin' cap, and sportin' a goatee. I decide, shit, I guess I gotta give this dude a charity pass or somethin'.

"Man," I tell him, "I can drive *any* motherfuckin' thing. It has a wheel, I can give it go-juice."

"Yeah?" Herman kinda perks up. "I just need the cash. My wife..."

"Oh, you got lady problems too? I heard that. So get a j-o-b, dude. Mine likes it when she don't see me. Deliver pizza or something."

"I did that for a little while," Herman says.

Finally, Herman puts his piece away and starts to look excited: "I've been a workin' man, man. But that shit don't pay. But I tell ya what *did* was the B&E's after the fact. Somebody order like an Extra Large Double Cheese Anchovy and while they started fussin' with their wallets, I'd be scopin' out their living rooms from the front door, and then just come back a little later when they wasn't in. Anyway, I got my release papers last week on good behavior, and cuz o' all the overcrowding and whatever. Can't get nothin' now. Say, you wanna go crack open a tall one somewhere? It's hot as pig balls out here." It was August in East Texas, and that ain't no shit.

So bein' that my keys was still stuck inside without even a car thief worth his shit anywhere nearby, I went and called AAA.

(To audience)

What? I'm a member. Just remember it'll be *my* ass that's pulled outta the fuckin' ditch the next goddamn duck drencher comes along. Can't beat that winchin' service of theirs.

(Back to business)

Since we was gonna wait a lifetime anyway, me and Herman went back inside the bowling alley and shot the shit a little more at the bar and that's pretty much where our business partnership had lift-off. A pitcher or two of Bud Light Lime later, we saw our future together as "The Coche Brothers." We even drew up a logo on the coasters that we'd leave as our calling card and shit.

"Mine Likes It When She Don't See Me"

I knew from watchin' cop and robber shows that mainly what we needed for dumpin' property not exactly ours was somethin' called a "fence," I guess cuz there's usually a big fuckin' gate goin' around the shop where the cars is brought. Herman didn't know nothin' about fences, though, so I, like, asked him what he'd expected to do with my vehicle if he'd lifted it, and he tells me he figured he'd just put it up on Craigslist or somethin'. That Herman.

Through some dudes that Herman'd served time with, we fell into knowin' this creepy, old fuck named McGraw who kept this garage out near the Port o' Beaumont. Sittin' on the hood of his Buick one morning in his nasty bathrobe, he told us that we had to boost a ride and bring it back to him, he didn't care what it was. Then later that day McGraw took one look at what we brought in and said, "You dudes for real or what?" I told him there prolly wasn't no tracking system or nothin' on it: Herman and me'd nabbed us an ice cream truck.

Herman, he'd bought a Rocket Pop, asked the dreadlocked dude driver if the back right rear tire might need a little O-2, and that's when I jumped aboard and became the motherfuckin' Ice Cream Man. Shoo, those things sure don't have much get up and go, though - they ain't gonna win no snail races, you wanna know something. And Mr. Dreadlock gave us a little bit of a foot chase right after. 'Course Herman wadn't no use - he couldn't even keep up, what with his asthma and all. Other prob was we couldn't get the damn ice cream music to turn off - just kept playin' "Whistle While You Work" *all* the way back to the goddamn fenced-up place.

And even though McGraw didn't like at all what we brought in, he kept us on and we moved on up the ranks. Mainly cuz dudes usually got nailed pretty fast after their first time, which made us kinda rare, I guess. Me, I only saw less and less o' Rosa, which was fine by the both of us. Guess that was the point of me gettin' a job and all for her.

Herman, to fix shit between him and Martha, he gave his wife this big-ass pink Cadillac for their second anniversary, which he said he'd grabbed it off some old cosmetics chick. He'd had the damn thing tricked out too, with super-dark windows, a big bass in the back, extra large wheels. Thing was killer, even if it was pink.

Like I said, Martha and him weren't doin' too good, though, and one night he picks me up at our usual time. Herman was lookin' pretty wiggid out, hands squeezin' the steering wheel like he was tryin' to choke somebody. "What's up," I say. "Everything ok, dude?"

Well, I was not much in the car before our asses were suddenly flyin' down the street. "Man, let me get my leg in the car at least!" I yell with my foot draggin' on the road.

"Mine Likes It When She Don't See Me"

"We got an emergency situation!" Herman shouts back, real angry-like. Wound up tight, this dude here was.

Then, like two seconds later we're screamin' into the Parkdale mall's parking lot, and now I get persistent: "What're we goin' after tonight, man? What's that McGraw want this time?"

"This ain't a McGraw job," Herman says and just kinda stares ahead lookin' like he was possessed.

That's when Herman reveals his plan. It seemed Martha, who worked at Cinnabon, had split. Just walked out and was plannin' to move outta the state. He figured he could grab her, take her way out somewhere and leave her ass stranded, and then once she cabbed it back her shit would be right there waitin' for her all spread out and dumped on the front lawn. He figured this'd be a good way to make Martha see the errors of her ways and so forth. Herman, he ain't no female guru, that's for damn certain.

Herman banged the steering wheel a few times and needed another blast off his inhaler. "Said she couldn't take livin' with me no more. What the goddamn-hell's wrong with me?" he gasped.

I didn't know where, you know, to even begin with that, but just then Herman yells, "Holy shit! Bitch's already off!" as the big pink Caddy with its dark-tints pulled out in front of us. Herman threw himself into action, manning all battle stations. As we blasted by her, Herman tells me, "All right, you jump out in front and get the bitch to stop."

"No way, man!" I fire back with both barrels. "I just drive, you know that." Plus, it seemed like flyin' out of a moving car might be painful.

I found out soon enough though, as that bastard Herman reached over me just then, opened my door, and just shoved my ass right out onto those parking stripes, and directly *in front of* motherfuckin' Martha.

But 'parently Martha, she didn't seem to be applyin' any mascara at that moment, cuz she stopped just short of creamin' my ass. After we both roll to a halt, I see her car door open...and, suddenly, I don't know what, because just then, I swear I mighta just as well died, because there's this angel, you know, just like standing there like it ain't nothin'. I think she was levitatin' maybe. She was sure tall. Blonde. Dimples. Like those cheerleaders I always wanted back in high school.

"Hey, you ok?" this beautiful goddess says, all soft and everything.

"Mine Likes It When She Don't See Me"

Dazed and whatever, just then I realize: that ain't Martha, not by a long shot. I asked this beautiful angel if she might happen to know a dark-haired, kinda dumb girl goes by the name o' Martha.

At first, Shelby - that's this cheerleader-looking, blonde goddess's name - didn't seem to know any Martha. But, then, she, like, says she does. I thought that was strange, you know, to forget and then remember a person in like two seconds. But Shelby tells me she bought the Caddy from Martha just, like, yesterday. They'd worked across from each other in the mall or somethin' and one day in the food court money'd changed hands and, well, Martha had just taken the cash and gotten clear the fuck outta Dodge. What I really couldn't figure, though, you wanna know the truth, was why Martha would even sell a car with a stereo system like that. Anyway, the main thing was that she'd already left the state without no forwarding address.

"Well, Shelby," I say, "that's a hell of a thing and all, and even though you're like super-fine, I'm afraid we're gonna have to take your car from you here to-night."

"You and who?" Shelby asks. Girl didn't seem concerned one bit.

"Well, him," I say pointing at my asthmatic partner runnin' towards us just then.

Then, I tell her like what this was all about, and then Shelby looks real surprised. "Oh, you're a carjacker?" she says, kinda amazed. "Shouldn't you maybe have a gun or a knife or something on you?"

"We're non-violent," I say, and just then Herman gets there, and I thought we was gonna have to call an ambulance for him, he was huffin' and puffin' so much.

"What the hell? Where's Martha? And who's this bitch?" Herman wheezes as he takes another shot from his inhaler.

I tell Herman what'd happened with the car and about Martha skippin' town and all, and he spins around like *The Exorcist* and really gives it to Shelby then: "You're in on this, huh? You know what you done? Foiled my shit, that's what."

Herman, barely able to breathe the entire time, was a whole can o' nuts that night, cuz then he whips out Henrietta and just like that he's got that piece pressed right up against Shelby's temple.

"C'mon, Herman, put Henrietta away now," I tell him. "This shit's done. No gettin' back at wifey now. She's splits-fuckin'-ville. Shelby says."

"Mine Likes It When She Don't See Me"

That's when Shelby, who *still* didn't look scared or nothin', looks at me, and we have this moment, and I'm thinkin' right then...*this chick might be into me!*

"Shelby says'," Herman kinda laughs, lookin' from me to Shelby. "What, you like this bitch all of a sudden?" Then tryin' - and failin' - to act all cool, Herman just manages to say, "Bitch, we'll be taking this car anyway. Move a-fuckin'-side," when, yep, he starts coughin' and grabbin' for his inhaler again.

Just as he's about take a hit, that's when I see Shelby fly into ass-kickin' action. Like some ninja-princess-bad-ass-Navy Seal, in one move she sends Herman's piece clatterin' to the ground, then grabs his inhaler with one hand and starts crushin' Herman's windpipe in the other. Herman's gaspin' and gurglin', and I thought that this was his end o' days. And the whole time Shelby's tellin' Herman he needs to start treatin' ladies, you know, with more respect, and not to use the b-word ever again and that little boys like him shouldn't be playin' with no kinds o' weapons. And to drive that shit home good, she draws one long, fine leg back and punts Henrietta clear across the parking lot. Piece: out. Damn, I was in fuckin' love.

Still in her clutches, Herman sorta whimpered out somethin' like, "Yes, ma'am, anything you say." After that Shelby slowly releases her death grip lettin' Herman crumple into this little pathetic heap on the pavement, and for a sec I thought she'd wasted ol' Herman. But then, like a gutless jackrabbit, he suddenly springs up and hoofs it on outta there. I never saw Herman run like that. And he nearly flooded his engine in tryin' to get gone fast, but once he did, that was the last I seen of that dude.

After we both watched Herman's Ford Focus disappear from our view, Shelby turns to me and says, "This may be kinda obvious, but you know you're really in the wrong line of work."

Then Shelby tells me I needed to come closer to her. I didn't wanna piss her off or nothin' so I did like she said. When I got there, Shelby leans forward, and I'm afraid she might strangle me now, but then I couldn't believe it, instead she plants this kiss on me. Those lips, they sent me this jolt, like that time I got tased by Rosa for blockin' the TV. Totally off my ass now, I opened my eyes, and Shelby's car door was open a little and - damn - I see somethin' - or *someone* - in Shelby's backseat: I realize, holy shit, that's *Martha*, all bound-up, wrigglin', with duct-tape wrapped around her face.

Shelby says, "Oh, yeah. Her. You have an address where we can dump this woman?"

"Mine Likes It When She Don't See Me"

That night Shelby and me, we busted outta town together leavin' Martha back on her front lawn along the way. And I asked Shelby if she needed my help in any o' her future activities -- I could be, like, her wheel man or somethin'. But she said everything'd be fine if I just kept my ass in the passenger seat.

Shelby had to explain it to me more later on, but I guess you maya already figured it all out by now: Shelby didn't work in no mall with Martha. She'd just ditched a hot Mercedes in the parkin' lot here and had to find somethin' else quick. When she saw that tricked-out pink Caddy she just went ape-shit and had to have it. She said she just got these urges sometimes. And I think that's where I come into the picture too.

As for Rosa, without me, I know she'll be gettin' lonely. I mean, who's gonna be able to bring her a Silver Bullet now when her shows is on? She'll have to weed through a lotta losers first, because this one - I mean, this fine specimen right here - is officially *off-the-market*.

Simon checks his watch and suddenly springs into action throwing on a "Kiss the Cook" apron.

SIMON (cont'd)

Awww, shit, there's her bus. Andrea, Shelby's little girl and my step-daughter-angel-in-trainin' will be here pronto and I gotta house to clean and cookies in the oven, you know? Her moms won't be back till dark. Shelby's a workin' woman; gotta bring home the bacon and all that.

A man on a mission, Simon hurriedly exits.

Lights fade.