

**How Can You Not Know?**

By Jim Martyka

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## Cast of Characters

**SHELLY** - A seasoned prostitute, nervous because she's caught in a bad deal...so it would seem

**DETECTIVE BOWLEY** - A cocky and bitter, seasoned detective.

## Scene

A back alley

## Time

Night

How Can You Not Know?

*Lights up with SHELLY standing and leaning against the wall, repeatedly checking her phone. You can tell she's nervous, impatient and yet, she's been here before.*

SHELLY: Where the hell is he?

*She checks her phone again. Looks around. Gets frustrated and starts to walk away just as DETECTIVE BOWLEY sneaks in behind her.*

SHELLY: To hell with this...

DETECTIVE BOWLEY: Hello Shelly.

SHELLY: Jesus Bowley. You scared me.

BOWLEY: Little jumpy for a hooker, ain't ya?

SHELLY: You know, I really hate it when you call me that.

BOWLEY: Well, princess, my apologies. What exactly would you like me to call...what it is that you do with your time?

SHELLY: You're an asshole, you know that.

***BOWLEY chuckles.***

SHELLY: You got a cigarette?

BOWLEY: For you beautiful, anything.

***BOWLEY offers her a cigarette and lights it as she smiles.***

SHELLY: Ahh, beautiful. I like that. See, you don't always have to be a dick.

BOWLEY: Ahh, detective jokes, I like it. Nice. When did you think of that one?

SHELLY: Last night, when I was blowing your partner down on 14<sup>th</sup>.

BOWLEY: Very funny.

SHELLY: Yeah. Funny.

***SHELLY looks at her phone again checking the time.***

SHELLY: Can we move this along? I gotta get back soon or he'll notice I'm gone.

BOWLEY: Absolutely, beautiful. You know what I'm looking for.

SHELLY: Yeah, look, I don't have much today. Everyone's getting tight-lipped, ya know? I think they feel you guys closing in.

BOWLEY: Huh. That's amazing, considering how often we keep missing 'em. Very strange. It's almost like they know we're coming. Or somebody's feeding us bad information.

SHELLY: Look, fucker, I just pass on what I hear. You think this is a good arrangement for me? You know what Marcus would do if he found out I was giving away anything other than my body? He'd--

BOWLEY: I'm well aware of what he would do. And it might be only slightly worse than what I'll do if you take that tone with me again. It's not my fault you got involved in this. Or that you got pinched. Or that you agreed to work with us. Now, let's try and keep this civilized, shall we? Even a whore like you can show some manners.

***SHELLY stares at him, fuming, but composes herself.***

SHELLY: Marcus has another shipment coming in. I'm not sure where yet.

BOWLEY: Is it at the docks?

SHELLY: I just said I don't know. All I know is that it's a big one. From Bolivia.

BOWLEY: When?

SHELLY: I don't know. But soon. He keeps talking like this is the one that will set him up for good.

BOWLEY: When? I need when and where.

SHELLY: Aren't you listening to me? I. Don't. Know.

BOWLEY: How can you not know?

SHELLY: *(sarcastically)* I'm sorry, detective. I didn't ask.

BOWLEY: *(ignoring her)* How can you not know?

SHELLY: *(ignoring him)* Hey Marcus, can you tell me when and where you're picking up your order of uncut heroin so I can tell my contact who happens to be a detective? See, he plans on busting your entire operation so it would just make it a whole lot easier if you would just fill in the blanks for me. Thank you so much.

BOWLEY: How can you not know?

SHELLY: Jesus Christ! Will you stop? I tell you what I know when I know it! What the fuck do you want from me?

BOWLEY: How can somebody who's running the whole operation not know?

***This stops SHELLY in her tracks. She takes a beat and stares at BOWLEY, utterly confused.***

SHELLY: What?

BOWLEY: I said, how can somebody who's running the--

SHELLY: Yeah, I heard what you said. But what are you talking about?

***BOWLEY slowly pulls out a flask, unscrews the top and takes a big, satisfying swig.***

BOWLEY: Ahhh. You know I always thought you were too pretty to be a hooker. You just looked too clean, too pure. You didn't fit the part.

SHELLY: Okay. Where--

***BOWLEY puts his hand up to stop her.***

BOWLEY: Your name is Katrina. You immigrated here from Belgrade ten years ago. You lost your mother and father to poverty over there. You came here with nothing, but soon you found yourself running with a gang of drug smugglers. And if you ask me, that was probably the only time in your life you sucked cock to get ahead. Not long after, leaders of that gang started disappearing and we started hearing rumors of a change in management. Then drug use in this city went up tenfold. You are wealthy. You are powerful. You are heavily insulated. And you've got a damn good cover. But now, beautiful, you're busted. *(beat)* Would you like another cigarette?

SHELLY: What...

BOWLEY: I almost feel bad making this bust. Seriously. A drug kingpin that moonlights as a prostitute. Just to keep us off her tail. Best cover ever.

SHELLY: I don't even... How can you even think this of me? Marcus will--

BOWLEY: Oh stop, Marcus doesn't exist! He's just part of the cover. You did everything right, truly. Even when we kept missing the big shipments, we had no idea. We chalked it up to bad luck. I thought eventually we'd catch up. But, in the end, when we really started looking, there was just too much misinformation. I had to answer too many questions about my source. Then I looked harder.

***Long beat.***

SHELLY: Bowley...I'll take that cigarette.

***BOWLEY smiles, hands her one and lights it.***

BOWLEY: You did good for a long time, beautiful, but all good things come to an end.

***There is a long silence as they both sit and smoke.  
Finally, SHELLY's phone buzzes loudly. She looks long and hard at the text. Then she sadly looks up at BOWLEY.***

SHELLY: I'm so sorry, detective.

BOWLEY: It's a game, one you played well. There's no need--

SHELLY: Your wife's dead.

***BOWLEY looks at her confused and starts to speak.***

SHELLY: Sarah's dead. So is your brother Charlie and your partner Hank. They were all killed ten minutes ago. Sarah was strangled at your home. Charlie was abducted coming home from teaching, drowned and dumped in the river. And Hank was shot outside Flynn's Tavern.

***BOWLEY just stares, stunned at what he's hearing, trying to decide whether he believes it or not.***

SHELLY: Hank I'm sure you can understand. But you might wonder why your wife and brother. Well, unfortunately, you have a reputation for being a bit of a talker. At least that's what Hank told me when I was blowing him last night. You're right. It was a damn good cover. You were also right when you said all good things come to an end. We played well together for a while. I gave you more than you give me credit for, Bowley. I fed you info, but more than that, I fed you people. How many drug busts did you personally make this year? How many of my own people did I sacrifice to keep you satisfied? But you weren't satisfied, were you? Not anymore. You had to keep looking. Well, somebody noticed. You think you were MY only source? Yes, detective all

good things do come to an end. And so, with that, it's time to say goodbye to this relationship.

***SHELLY walks up to BOWLEY and gently places a kiss on his cheek. She starts to walk away, then stops and walks back to him.***

SHELLY: I'm sorry, I do have one more question. If you really knew who I was, why in the world would you come here alone?

***BOWLEY is overwhelmed and can't think of anything to say.***

BOWLEY: *(breaking down)* You...you bitch. I...I'm taking you in. You can't...I win...you didn't...Oh, God Sarah, Charlie...what did you...I'll fucking kill, you fucking bitch! You hear me, I'll fucking kill you.

***SHELLY slaps him hard.***

SHELLY: Manners, detective.

***She glares at BOWLEY who breaks down sobbing, crumbling in a heap.***

SHELLY: Oh, by the way, you were right about all of it, except one thing.

***With that, she starts to walk away and says the rest over her shoulder.***

SHELLY: Marcus does exist. Say hello Marcus. Goodbye detective.

***She walks off stage as the detective looks up in her direction.***

BOWLEY: *(weakly)* No.

***Sound of a gun clicking. Gun shot.***

***LIGHTS.***