

THE PERFECT COVER UP

Written by

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When a troubled man visits a tattoo shop to cover a bad tattoo, he ends up getting one that suits him perfectly.

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FADE IN:

INT. MAX TATS - NIGHT

Black shades cover the front windows and door of this small shop. It's dimly lit. Framed posters of various tattoos hang on the red walls.

A reclining chair sits in the middle of an immaculately kept station. On the counter, a silver tray holds needles and piercing supplies. Next to it, a pyramid of tattoo inks, a stack of tattoo magazines, and an antique strong box.

Through the open door of a side room comes the muffled sound and flickering light of a TV.

Someone jiggles the front door handle. It's locked. They KNOCK. At first lightly but after a moment they knock so hard the glass rattles.

From the side room a voice yells out.

MAX (O.S.)  
Alright! Alright!

The TV light goes dark and out walks MAX (50). Chinese food container in hand, he closes the door behind him.

MAX  
You break my door we're gonna have  
a problem!

In ripped jeans and a tight tank, tattoos cover every visible inch of skin on Max's muscular body, except his bearded face.

Max flicks a switch, turning on the lights. He places the Chinese food container on the counter, pulls a key from his pocket and opens the strong box.

Inside is a gun and a baggie of cocaine with a tiny spoon inside. Grabbing the spoon, he snorts a bit up each nostril, sticks the spoon back in the baggie and closes the box.

Max sniffs deep as he heads to the door. The bell above jingles as he opens the door.

Outside, snow falls hard behind JERRY (40). He shivers, his zip up hoodie offering little protection from the blizzard.

MAX  
You Jerry?

Jerry nods. Max opens the door wider, Jerry walks in. A bluster of snow follows him. Max quickly shuts the door.

MAX

So, let's see this mess you need me to cover up.

JERRY

We alone here?

MAX

Told you we would be. Why the fuck does it matter?

JERRY

It matters cus I'm paying you double for privacy. Don't want no one to see me. Got it?

Jerry unzips his jacket and pulls down the hood revealing a large snake tattoo on the side of his face. Max stares at it.

JERRY

You seen me before? Huh? You got a TV here?

MAX

No. Don't watch TV. Oh man...you some kind of reality star? You the next bachelor or something?

JERRY

Thought you didn't watch TV.

MAX

My lady does. Loves that show.

JERRY

You talk too much, and I'm in a hurry.

From the back of his pants, Jerry pulls out a gun, aims it at Max. Instantly Max puts his hands up.

MAX

What the fuck, man?

JERRY

Cell phone!

MAX

In my back pocket.

While aiming the gun, Jerry reaches into Max's back pocket, pulls out his cell then places it in his own front pocket.

JERRY

How long this gonna take?

MAX

Depends. You gonna kill me after?

JERRY

No, man. But I will tie you up so I have a chance to get away.

MAX

Fair enough. I think about two hours should do it. Have any idea what you want?

JERRY

Don't care. Roses maybe. Just need it gone.

Gun held to his head, Max leads Jerry to the station.

INT. MAX TATS - NIGHT

In the chair, Jerry has the gun pointed at Max while he tattoos his face.

MAX

Never did like snakes. Grew up near a swamp. Always had them around our house. They'd steal eggs from our hen house then slither away.

Jerry holds the gun steady and stares straight ahead. His jaw is clenched, his eyes narrow in anger.

MAX

So hard to catch too. Nasty things, snakes.

Suddenly Jerry turns his head toward Max, who quickly pulls the needle away.

JERRY

Shut the fuck up about snakes! My father gave me this tattoo as a punishment...for stealing a pack of his cigarettes! I was thirteen! Did time for marking me up! And for other fucked up shit he did to me and my sister. Just want it gone!

Jerry faces forward again. Shocked, Max continues.

INT. MAX TATS - NIGHT

The needle buzzes as Max works intensely. Jerry hasn't moved.

The buzz stops. Max puts the tattoo gun down and shakes his hand out.

MAX

Sorry. Hand is getting numb.

JERRY

No breaks! Finish this up!

Max rolls his eyes, continues shaking his hand out.

MAX

Fine. But I need a bump to keep me going. Got some right here. Just need to reach behind me.

Max points to the strong box.

MAX

Want one?

JERRY

No. Go ahead. But hurry up.

Jerry watches as Max rolls his stool back, reaches over and opens the box. He sticks his hand in, feels around and grabs the small baggie.

One big snort up each nostril, off the tiny spoon. Offers the spoon out toward Jerry.

MAX

You sure?

Jerry shakes his head no. Jerry doesn't watch as Max places the spoon back in the baggie, and doesn't watch as he places it back in the box. He doesn't see Max carefully pull the gun out of the box before he closes it.

MAX

Alright. Let's finish this up.

Gun in his left hand, Max begins tattooing again. Jerry stares straight ahead. Max struggles to tattoo with only one hand. Jerry gets suspicious.

JERRY

What the hell is wrong with you?

MAX

Bump just made me a little shaky. We're almost done here.

JERRY

You know who I am?

MAX

No idea, and I don't want to know.  
Think I'm better off not knowing.

JERRY

Well, you'll know tomorrow. I'm  
everything my father said I was.

MAX

My father abused the hell out of me  
too. Told me I was stupid and beat  
me every fucking day.

The buzz stops, then CLICK. Jerry turns to see Max holding a  
gun. Max shoots Jerry's hand, causing Jerry's gun to fall.

Jerry screams in agony. His fingers a mangled mess.

MAX

But that's no excuse to rape little  
girls you piece of shit!

JERRY

You fuck! You stupid fuck!

Max shoots Jerry's other hand, then his thigh. Jerry screams.

MAX

Yeah, I seen that snake tattoo  
before. Saw it on the news just  
before you got here. Gave you a  
perfect cover up for where you're  
going though.

Opening a drawer, Max grabs a hand held mirror, holds it in  
front of Jerry's face. Jerry screams.

JERRY

No!

Max kicks Jerry's gun away then reaches into Jerry's front  
pocket, grabs his phone and dials 9-1-1.

Writhing in pain, Jerry slithers off the chair onto the  
floor, his new tattoo facing up. It reads, "PEDOPHILE".

FADE OUT.