

The Return of Bug Eyed Bill

By

J. Mark Scarbrough

INT. PAULSEN'S PHARMACY - DAY

An old-fashioned gumball machine gleams near the entrance of this timeless one-stop mom 'n' pop shop.

THE FRONT COUNTER

as the lone clerk, JIM, 20s, a slacker, closely examines a CHECK made out for \$50.

A pretty woman, SUSAN, late 20s, fashionable, waits for him to make up his mind.

Her eyes drift to the small TV resting on the back counter. The local news is on:

ANCHOR (O.S.)
... police are still searching for
the suspect in a string of armed
robberies....

THE TV SCREEN

briefly flashes a POLICE SKETCH of the suspect wearing over-sized goggles that give him a bug-eyed appearance.

ANCHOR (O.S. CONT'D)
...the goggled gunman struck again
late last night....

BACK TO THE REGISTER

as Jim shoves the check back to Susan.

JIM
Can't do it.

SUSAN
But it's a government check.

JIM
This ain't a bank.

BACK TO THE GUMBALL MACHINE

where a dark figure approaches it.

A brawny hand wearing a skull ring slaps the side of it, trying to force a freebie....

BACK TO THE REGISTER

as Susan smiles, turns on the charm.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN
Pretty please....

In the background behind her the dark figure continues to jiggle the gumball machine.

JIM
No.

SUSAN
Just this once.

JIM
I said no -

SUSAN
I'll make it worth your while....

JIM
Look, I'm not gonna give you any money, so stop wasting my time.

He returns to his magazine as if she no longer exists.

BACK TO THE GUMBALL MACHINE

as a red ball drops in the slot.

The brawny hand retrieves it as Susan passes by on her way to the door.

THE REGISTER

as Jim pores over his magazine.

Then the muzzle of a FUTURISTIC PISTOL eases into view and taps the magazine. Jim lowers it -

JIM
I told you, I'm not gonna -

He gasps at the sight of the pistol aimed at his nose - and the leering visage behind it: BUG-EYED BILL, the biggest, baddest space outlaw in the entire universe! He wears black Road Warrior-like leathers, heavy boots, and a duster. A pair wrap-around goggles magnify his eyes.

BUG-EYED BILL
That's no way to treat a lady.

Jim gulps and raises his hands. Susan returns, beaming with new hope - her champion has arrived!

(CONTINUED)

BUG-EYED BILL (CONT'D)
Now be a gentleman and give her
what she asked for.

He waves the gun toward the cash register.

Fighting panic, Jim produces a set of keys and promptly
drops them. He looks at Bill, fearful.

BUG-EYED BILL (CONT'D)
Pick 'em up.

Jim retrieves the keys. Struggles to find the right one.

BUG-EYED BILL (CONT'D)
Hurry!

JIM
I'm trying -

BUG-EYED BILL
Try harder! Or I'm gonna splatter
you!

He flips a switch. The mysterious weapon begins buzz as it
powers up.

JIM
Please - please don't shoot!

He starts to come unglued as the BUZZING intensifies. Then:

SUSAN (O.S.)
Billy!

CUT TO:

INT. PAULSEN'S PHARMACY - DAY (REALITY)

as 8-year-old Billy continues to point his toy ray gun at
Jim who's reading a magazine, hardly amused.

Susan, more stressed and haggard than before, calls from the
open front door:

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Billy! C'mon -

BILLY
But I'm robbing the store, Momma!

His eyes are wide and proud behind a pair of over-sized
adult glasses. Susan glares at Jim.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

Believe me, I understand the
urge. Now put that thing away and
let's go -

Billy tucks the gun into his ill-fitting, hand-me-down
trousers and follows his mother out the door.

EXT. PAULSEN'S PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS

as Susan leads Billy out onto the sidewalk.

BILLY

We gonna get some ice cream now?

SUSAN

Not yet -

BILLY

But you said we would -

SUSAN

Billy, just stop it, will you? Man
up.

BILLY

But you promised -

SUSAN

Well, sometimes promises get
broken. You might as well learn
that now.

BILLY

Like with Daddy?

SUSAN

Don't talk to me about him. Now
c'mon -

But he won't go. She gets in his face.

SUSAN

Damn it, Billy, I don't have time
for this!
(off his look)
And quit making those bug eyes at
me! I'm tired of looking at you in
those stupid glasses -
(takes them off)
Why do you wear these, anyway? You
look ridiculous -

(CONTINUED)

He fights back tears. She notices. Kneels in front of him.

SUSAN

I'm sorry, baby. You know how I
get if I don't get my medicine.
(off his look)
Look, I'm trying, alright? I'm
doing the best I can, I swear.

She can see he's not convinced. She sighs, hopeless. She
glances back at the pharmacy, then reaches into her bra and
pulls out a small, crumpled wad of bills.

BILLY'S MOM

Wait here.

Billy watches her go back inside. He looks down at the
bug-eyed glasses resting in his hands, his face stern....

INT. PAULSEN'S PHARMACY - MOMENTS LATER

A pint of cheap vodka slides onto the counter top followed
by seven dollars.

Susan waits for judgment.

Jim gives her a glance, then takes the money just as the
door bell chimes - CUT TO:

BILLY'S FANTASY

which plays out in SLOW MOTION:

THE FRONT DOOR

swings open and a pair of boots enter...

JIM'S FACE

blanches and his eyes peel back in fear...

A PRETTY AND FASHIONABLE SUSAN

turns around to see...

BUG-EYED BILL

bursting inside, his eyes raging beneath the goggles.

He plants his feet in a heroic stance and levels his ray
gun. END SLOW MOTION.

(CONTINUED)

The space outlaw roars like a lion as the gun powers up:

BUG-EYED BILL
Don't you dare sell her that crap
or I'll -

The gun's buzzing reaches a LOUD CRESCENDO - CUT TO:

REALITY

as Little Billy keeps his toy ray gun pointed:

BILLY
- blast you to particles!

Frozen in mid-transaction, Jim and Susan stare at the
tear-streaked boy, mute spectators.

A long pause. Then:

JIM
You got it, kid.

He takes the bottle away and pushes the money back to Susan
who runs a gamut of emotions: Shock, anger, humiliation,
shame, and... love.

Billy lowers the pistol.

BILLY
C'mon, Momma. Let's get outta
here.

He escorts Susan to the front door. Just before they exit,
Jim calls out from behind the counter:

JIM
Hey, kid.
(Billy pauses)
What's your name?

Billy stands tall, puffs out his chest.

BILLY
I'm Bug-Eyed Bill.

And he's gone.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Billy and his mom sit on a bench eating ice cream.

SUSAN

So who is this Bug-Eyed Bill,
anyway?

BILLY

He's the biggest baddest outlaw the
universe has ever known! Wanted in
five galaxies...

He continues his wild yarn as his mother listens and the
CREDITS ROLL....

THE END