

Stuck on You

by

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FADE IN.

INT. KENNEDY AIRPORT TERMINAL - EVENING

A cavernous space, decorated with billboards and signs.

ROBERT MCGUIRE (35) fights through the CROWD, briefcase in hand.

His expensive shoes TAP against the floor as he weaves past lines of TICKET HOLDERS.

Overhead, the loudspeaker CRACKLES.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, please be advised
that the next arrival of -

The rest of the sentence drowns in STATIC.

Robert pauses mid-stride, frowns in concentration.

A harried BUSINESSWOMAN (40s) pushes by, clips him with her suitcase.

Robert glares in irritation. He shakes his head, and raises an arm to check his watch. It's gone.

He scans the floor frantically, past the blur of MOVING FEET and luggage. Wrinkled wrappers and receipts. But no watch.

Robert GROANS, and looks up.

Into the earnest, beaming face of a MOONIE.

A youngish thirty, the man's dressed in a flowing white shirt. A ponytail hangs neatly down his back.

He leans towards Robert, intimately close.

MOONIE

Salvation, sir! Afraid of nuclear war?
Terrorism? Do you love your fellow man?

A second GROAN escapes Robert's lips.

ROBERT

Excuse me...

Robert steps aside.

The Moonie mirrors the movement, and blocks Robert's path of escape. He raises his voice, over the BUSTLE of the terminal.

MOONIE

Love, sir! We at the Church of Progressive Social Reform know what you feel. Understand the frustrations of being trapped in a materialistic society!

He nods significantly at a billboard. It's a life-sized picture of the latest super model - six feet of glistening skin, sweat and silicone.

MOONIE

The sins of the world continue to multiply. Unwed pregnancies. Broken relationships. So little room for love, and family values.

Robert's eyes wander to a nearby television. Set to CNN, it broadcasts footage from the latest war.

The Moonie sees it, and nods sadly.

MOONIE

So little room for optimism in this world. And that's what we need, most of all.

He extends a pamphlet to Robert.

MOONIE

Read this. There's no obligation.

Robert shakes his head firmly.

ROBERT

No thanks. I'm Presbyterian.

The Moonie's smile doesn't waver.

MOONIE

Then accept this, sir. Our phone number's on the back. If you ever wish for spiritual renewal, please contact us. It's a toll free call!

He reaches out, and slaps something small and hard into Robert's palm.

ROBERT

Ow!

Robert winces in pain. He looks down at his open hand.

It's a small yellow button, with a familiar graphic. Two dots for eyes. A curved line for the mouth.

ROBERT

You've got to be fucking kidding me.

He looks up in irritation, but the Moonie's gone. He scans the terminal. No sign of a ponytail.

A dot of blood beads on his fingertip.

Robert throws the button to the floor, and crushes it beneath his shoe. He smiles with satisfaction.

Then he heads for the exit, out rotating glass doors.

EXT. KENNEDY AIRPORT TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

Robert stalks past a bum, his hand extended for change.

Robert whistles, and hails a limo. He slides in, and the black car pulls away, into traffic.

INT. OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT - LATER

The door to Robert's apartment is freshly painted. Numbers read #17-2; formed from solid, gleaming brass.

Robert fishes for the key, and slides it into the lock. The dead bolt SNAPS back. The lock CLICKS open.

INT. ROBERT'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens to admit an exhausted Robert McGuire.

Jacket draped over one shoulder, Robert shuffles across the room. He tosses the briefcase on the couch and collapses next to it. He looks around wearily.

The room's fantastic. Polished hardwood floors. A 40 inch flat screen hangs opposite a wall made mostly of glass. Outside, the skyline twinkles like Christmas lights. It's an amazing view.

Robert SIGHS, unimpressed.

He toys with a People Magazine on the glass coffee table.

He retrieves the briefcase, and sets it carefully on the table. Something inside it CLATTERS.

Robert POPS the latch to reveal a stack of printouts.

On top is the button - dead center and smiling.

ROBERT

Fuck!

He shoves the briefcase away. It falls off the back of the table. A cloud of papers float to the floor.

CLICK. The button hits the ground, and starts to roll. Under the table, straight towards Robert.

Robert lifts his feet to the safety of the couch.

He watches through the glass as the button advances. Rotation blurs the lines of the face; makes the mouth appear to open and close.

Inches from the couch, it begins to wobble. Then it falls over - face up, staring at the ceiling.

Robert stares at it, a confused expression on his face.

He rolls up the People Magazine, and pokes it. He reaches out. The button doesn't move.

After a moment, he picks the thing up with two fingers. He scratches a manicured fingernail against the black paint. It doesn't chip or smudge.

Robert LAUGHS.

INT. ROBERT'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He carries the button into the kitchen, and drops it unceremoniously in the trash.

He opens the refrigerator, and POPS the cap on a beer. Robert smiles with amusement, and starts to drink.

INT. ROBERT'S BEDROOM - LATER

A sports trophy sits on the night stand, shiny and polished. The alarm clock casts a green glow around the room.

Robert lies in bed, buried in a comforter.

A muffled THUD comes from somewhere in the apartment.

Robert stirs in his sleep. He GRUMBLES and turns over - away from the offending noise.

INT. ROBERT'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Robert stands at the refrigerator, dressed for the office. His hair sticks up in tufts, as he pulls a carton of O.J. from the shelf.

His face bleary with sleep, he dials his voice mail. The voice comes through: tinny, but audible.

SUSAN (V.O.)

Robert? Robert, it's me. Susan. We need to talk.

Robert takes a swig from the carton, and listens.

SUSAN (V.O.)

I know you said you needed more space. But we've been together for almost six months. And I love you. I really want to make this work...

DELETE.

Robert drops the phone face first on the counter.

He grabs a mug, and turns away - towards the coffee machine.

BEEP. CLICK. CLATTER.

SUSAN (V.O.)

Robert? Robert, it's me. Susan. We need to talk...

Robert spins on his heel, the mug limp in his hand.

Now face up, the phone glows as the message replays.

Robert grabs the phone, and hits DELETE. He looks at the phone quizzically, then pockets it.

He stares across the kitchen counter. Brushes a hand against its surface. Peeks behind the microwave.

Robert looks in the trash. Nothing there. He hesitates over the garbage, his hand poised to dig. A look of disgust crosses his face. He shakes his head "no."

Something SKITTERS behind him.

Robert whirls around. The room's empty. He peeks under the kitchen table. Nothing there either, except a few dust bunnies.

Robert backs out of the kitchen, slowly.

INT. ROBERT'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Briefcase in hand, Robert heads for the front door.

He runs a hand across his head - feels the tangles of hair. He grabs a brush from a table, his eyes glued to the kitchen entrance.

The key CLICKS solidly in the lock behind him.

INT. OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT - LATER

A cart rolls down the hallway, loaded with cleaning fluid and rags.

It's pushed by SALLY GESSER (53). A gray uniform covers her form, in stark contrast to her bleach-blond hair.

Sally stops at Room #17-2, a weary look on her face.

She picks up a rag with calloused fingers, and starts to polish the numbers on the door.

A THUMP inside gets her attention. She pauses, mid-wipe.

Sally knocks hesitantly on the door.

SALLY

Mr. McGuire? You home?

Nothing.

She lifts the rag again. Then hears additional CLATTER, as something SKITTERS across the floor.

SALLY

(muttering)

He no have a cat.

She frowns, and leans an ear against the door. Inside, it's silent once more. Whatever it was, now lies still.

Sally shrugs. She puts the rag back in the cart, and pushes it slowly to the next apartment.

The wheels CREAK, and mask another THUMP from room #17-2.
Sally starts the process over again, now on #17-3.

SALLY
(to herself)
No pet lease in this building. I'm not
cleaning up after kitties. He no tip
well enough for that.

INT. ELEVATOR BANKS - EVENING

The doors of the elevator CHIME open.

Robert steps out, accompanied by DAVE CULLINS (42). A soft blond man, Dave is even better dressed than Robert. His Brooks Brothers suit covers his paunch well.

DAVE
So, you're coming out tonight? And
you're single?

Robert nods, the morning's paranoia all but forgotten.

ROBERT
Susan and I broke up. I'm available.

Dave grins broadly, a gleam in his eyes.

DAVE
Perfect. Got a date for you. Her name's
Celeste. Don't know much about her
personality, but the rest is pretty
impressive.

Dave waves his hands in the air, indicates a classic 'hourglass figure'.

Robert pats Dave on the shoulder, and returns the smile.

ROBERT
Perfect. Just what I'm looking for. See
you at eight in the lobby?

Dave nods and waves. They head down the hallway in opposite directions, towards their respective apartments.

INT. ROBERT'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Robert tosses his coat on a chair. Whistles as he fishes in the refrigerator for a beer.

He smiles to himself, and looks under the kitchen table. Still nothing but dust bunnies.

Robert CHUCKLES good naturedly, and shakes his head. He chugs the beer, and tosses the bottle in the trash.

INT. ROBERT'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the bedroom, Robert's changed into jeans. He hums to himself as he slicks back his hair. It's perfect; not a strand out of place.

He spies a picture of an attractive dark-haired woman, framed on the dresser. It's Susan.

He picks the picture up, and eyes it critically.

ROBERT

Don't need you anymore. Got a date with Celeste. And I hear she's stacked.

He dumps the picture in a drawer, and crosses the room towards the closet. He sticks an arm in, and feels around inside.

Suddenly, he flinches in pain.

ROBERT

Damn! What the -

He pulls back his arm, a blazer scrunched in his fist. He grabs the jacket, and unfolds like a limp accordion.

The black cloth of the jacket is clearly expensive. And in perfect contrast to the bright yellow button, which hangs off the lapel like a flattened corsage.

The edges of the black smile twist. The eyes slant upward in an evil glint. The line of the mouth splits in two, and reveals jagged, pointed teeth.

Robert SCREAMS like a girl, and bats at the button blindly.

He grabs his hand and SCREAMS again. Blood wells out between his fingers.

The button drops to the floor with a CLUNK, and rolls into the darkness of the closet.

Robert throws the jacket into the closet, SLAMS the door.

He runs to the bathroom, his hand clutched to his chest.

Inside the closet, something GIGGLES.

INT. ROBERT'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

ROBERT

Oh my God.

Robert rummages through the cabinet with shaking hands.

He scrubs the skin with alcohol. Then brings the wound to his face for a closer look.

Instead of a pinprick, a small circle of perforations cover his hand. A bite mark; the flesh already purple around the puncture wounds.

Robert looks in the mirror. A madman gazes back.

ROBERT

I've gone fucking insane.

He looks towards the closet. It's between him and the bedroom door. Fifteen or more feet.

Robert watches as the closet CREAKS open, just a crack.

Something GIGGLES again, from inside the closet. Sounds even crazier than the man in the mirror looks.

Robert bolts for the door.

A yellow blur shoots past his face, misses his cheek by inches. It lands in the darkness - somewhere between Robert, the bed and the door.

Robert backs away, as his eyes scan the floor.

ROBERT

(mutters)

Where the hell is it?

He looks under the bed. Nothing.

Something streaks by like a bullet, and hits Robert in the chest.

Robert rips something free, and tosses it across the room. Specks of blood stain his shirt.

Robert stares at the blood on his palm. He SCREAMS across the room, into the darkness.

ROBERT

How the fuck are you leaping, without any legs?!?

Another GIGGLE makes him glance down.

Just in time to see the button roll up a shoe, and under the cuff of his jeans.

Robert brushes frantically at the pant leg. He kicks wildly, until...

CLUNK. The button falls out. It lands on the floor face up, and stares maliciously at Robert.

With a ROAR, Robert stomps on the button with a brown leather loafer. Then HOWLS in pain.

ROBERT

Ow...!

He yanks off the shoe, holds it up to his face.

The button's stuck to the bottom. The pin protrudes clean through the sole.

Robert stares as the face GIBBERS and CHATTERS. Then it lets go, and drops to the floor.

Robert spies the trophy on the night stand. He grabs it, just as the button leaps again. The swing hits dead center.

The button CLATTERS to the floor.

In a frenzy, Robert swings the trophy repeatedly. Beats at the pin as it SQUEAKS.

ROBERT

Stupid. Mother fucking. Walmart Logo...

The trophy gouges into the hardwood floor, throws Robert off-balance. He pitches forward onto the ground - his face inches from the button.

The button's dented and scraped. It's not moving. The painted smile suddenly widens.

Robert stares as the button begins to drool. Then it launches itself at his face.

Robert shields himself with a hand. The button buries itself in his arm, and tears upwards towards his neck.

Robert stumbles towards the kitchen, in agony.

INT. ROBERT'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Robert staggers blindly against the counter. He flails out with his hand - the button attached and chewing. It hits the microwave with a THUD.

A spark of hope dawns on his face.

Robert tears open the microwave, and slams his hand against the inside walls. The button CLANGS as it drops to the glass plate, momentarily dislodged.

Robert slams the microwave door, and punches START.

ROBERT

Got you, motherfucker!

The button SHRIEKS, and throws itself against the door.

Robert watches as the machine sparks. Oily smoke rises from the vents.

The timer DINGS. Inside the microwave, all movement has stopped.

Robert opens the door hesitantly, and pokes the button with a fork. It's sticky, charred and inert.

Robert drops the fork in the sink.

He slides down the cabinets, and sits quietly on the floor. He stares at the wall, and doesn't blink.

INT. ELEVATOR BANKS - NIGHT

The elevator CHIMES. Three figures step out.

The first is Dave, unsteady on his feet. The second is CELESTE (25) - an attractive blonde in a little black dress, and noteworthy assets.

The third is Robert - balanced unconscious between them.

Celeste totters forward on high heels.

CELESTE

He always like this? Nervous and freaky?

Dave shakes his head 'no'. He stops when the vertigo gets to be too much.

DAVE

No. Not like him at all. Guess he's been under a lot of stress. Maybe someone slipped him something. I think he's been hallucinating about stuff.

Celeste gives him a nasty look.

CELESTE

Nice set up, Dave. Next time, let me bring my own date. You know he almost threw up on me?

They drag Robert to the door of #17-2.

Dave retrieves keys from Robert's pocket. They let themselves in.

CELESTE (O.S.)

God, look at this place. It's a fucking mess!

INT. ROBERT'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dave and Celeste lay Robert down on the bed gently. Celeste pats Robert on the head with sisterly affection.

CELESTE

Sleep well, honey. And stop with the X, okay? It doesn't agree with you.

Dave and Celeste leave the bedroom. They pause, silhouetted momentarily in the doorway.

DAVE

You know, I live right down the hall. Want to go to my place?

CELESTE

Sure. Got to end on a better note than this.

DAVE

Great! I'll leave a note, let him know where to find the spare key.

The front door CLICKS shut behind them, followed by the SNAP of the dead bolt.

Robert turns over in his sleep. He mutters fitfully, plagued by dreams.

ROBERT
Watch out. They bite...

From the back of the closet, a MEWING sound is heard.

Light from the hallway casts long shadows. Just enough illumination to see the collection of shoes, lined neatly across the floor of the closet.

One of the shoes seems out of place. There's a sock bunched inside. Dust bunnies line the top, in an almost planned formation. The MEWING sounds are stronger here.

Little yellow dots bob up and down, just out of view.

Robert SNORES, his mouth open and slack.

The MEWS turn into excited SQUEALS. A flood of little yellow buttons pour over the top of the shoe, towards the foot of the bed.

They surge up the sheets, bouncing and CHIRPING. They swarm forward, towards a unconscious Robert.

They burrow themselves into his face, CHEEPING happily.