

# Quixote Bronson, Savior of Neglected Suburban Housewives

*by* Con Chapman

It is Saturday night in the suburbs west of Boston--no better place to view man's inhumanity to woman. As my partner Pancho Sanza and I drift wearily from one upscale restaurant to another, we see on the looks of the husbands indifference bordering on cruelty as an endless parade of wives drones on about window treatments, children's grades, spats with girlfriends; the very warp and woof of their existence, but matters inspiring only apathy in their spouses.

*" . . . so then Marie says--don't look at the fish when I talk to you!"*

I--I who have been so unlucky in love with my beloved Dulcinea del Tobasco!--I resolved many years ago that if I could not find my soul mate here on earth, I would do whatever I could to make the lives of women locked in loveless marriages more liveable. (So many 'L's' give my tongue a workout--it is in great shape but alas, Dulcinea will not have me!) Perhaps, you say, I am mixing in affairs that are none of my business. Very well, you are entitled to my opinion, but I am merely trying to make the world a better place for the legions of ladies who agonize over their outfits, spend hours with their hair in foil getting it frosted, arranging for babysitters, only to watch their "lovers"--I use the term with the

inverted commas of scorn!--pecking away at "personal digital assistants" under the table.

I have asked my neighbor, Pancho Sanza, to be my squire or "sidekick" as you Americans say in your vulgar, corrupted English. Someone must hold our table while I importune the insensitive clods who look over the shoulders of their chattering wives to see the scores of silly Boston "Bruins" and "Celtics". I would spit on your televised "sports," but I--unlike you--have some manners!

We arrive at Tiramisu, a charming but pricey *boite de nuit* where hedge fund managers and venture capitalists talk loudly of their most lucrative conquests. We hear nothing of the "duds" in their portfolios! I see a table of two, the man gnawing on a breadstick like a dog on a rawhide. From time to time he makes eye contact with his wife and grunts "Unh-huh," but as soon as she begins to talk again his eye reverts to the bar, where a *zaftig* wine waitress with thick upper arms and a tattoo on the small of her back--the, how you say, "tramp stamp"--can be seen unscrewing corks from bottles. I decide now is the time to unscrew *him!*



"Pancho," I say. "Hold the table."

"Si Senor Quixote," he says, tearing the crust off a piece of "homemade" asiago bread. Whose home, I wonder, was it made in?

"If the waitress comes, tell her I will have the pecan-encrusted haddock with asparagus," I say as I stand up.

"You no want to hear the specials?"



*Me and Pancho Sanza.*

"No," I say firmly. "I am a man who knows what he wants, even if I so rarely get it."

With that I draw myself up to my full 5' 10", and begin to channel the spirit of Charles Bronson, the quintessential tough guy.



*Bronson, Ireland, McCallum*

It was Bronson who, having gotten an eyeful of Jill Ireland, walked up to her husband David McCallum and said, quite bluntly, "I'm going to marry your wife." This is the improvement that I have added to the method of the chivalrous Knight of La Mancha; an undercurrent of menace, a suggestion that if the man with the wandering eye doesn't straighten up and fly right, I will simply take his woman away.



I adjust my cape and make a bee-line across the restaurant, startling some of the waitstaff that I bump into. "No one ever saw a bee fly in a straight line," I say by way of excusing myself.

I present myself at the table so as to block the man's view of the buxom girl he's been ogling over his wife's shoulder. "Excuse me, Senorita," I say, bowing low.

"I'll have the Cobb salad and the beef *tournedos*," she says, apparently mistaking me for *un garcon*.



*She wants the beef, not the fish.*

"No, madame, I am not hear to feed your stomach--I am here to feed your *soul*."

"But I don't like fish," she says, visibly perplexed.

"Perhaps I should explain," I say. "Your husband has been fantasizing about Sondra, the waitress over at the wine bar, for the past twenty minutes."

"The one who's stacked like a lanai on a Hawaiian apartment building?"

"Yes--by her butt crack tatt, ye shall know her."

The woman--who is known to her friends as "Tori"--snaps her head around to look at her husband.

"Evan--is that true?"



*"Crest has been shown to be an effective decay-preventive dentifrice when used in a conscientiously-applied program of oral hygiene and regular professional care."*

The man is crestfallen, and I'm not talking about the toothpaste. "How would this guy know?" he asks, playing the ingenue, but Tori can tell from his defensive tone that I've caught him red-minded.

"*Senor*, I would gladly love and care for your beautiful wife if you no longer wish to do so," I say, bowing low and working more than a hint of sarcasm into my voice.



"*Gracias*," Tori says with a smile, warming to the Old World charm that I draw from my overflowing reservoir of chivalry.

The man tries to stare me down with the steely resolve that he likes to use when making a capital call on a balky institutional investor.

"It is up to you," I say to him. "You can treat her right--*or I will take her away from you!*"

He blinks, and I know it is over, our little *mano a mano tete a tete* in Franish italics.

"I-I'm sorry, sweetie," he says to her, and he almost sounds sincere.

"You have been such of the big help, Senor . . ." Tori says in a misbegotten but deeply appreciated attempt to imitate my fractured Esperanto-like *melange* of Romance languages.

"You may remember me--and I hope you always will--as Hidalgo Quixote Bronson--Savior of Neglected Suburban Housewives."

