

THE MISADVENTURES OF KEKE MCBRIDE

Part I: Shirley VS. Barbara



By Dee Greer

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PART 1

SHIRLEY VS. BARBARA

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I looked up one day and this nigga had me on some Barbara and Shirley type shit. Like... me. Classy, career woman, never slipping, well put together...ME. Seriously on this Barbara and Shirley shit. You know who I'm talking about. That song your mother and your grandmother used to play. The one where the woman calls up her man's mistress and tells her that she may as well leave him alone. That song has new meaning for me.

Listen here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCS0omXiauc>

Yes. That was me. I was sitting there with a name and a number. Sitting at my kitchen table, knees shaking, body bobbing up and down, kid playing a few feet away in the living room, oblivious to the turmoil her mother was facing. Do I call? Do I just confront him? I'd always been one of those, "Don't blame the woman, blame your man. He made you the promises, not her," type of woman. But here I was, debating. I had questions and I wanted answers from her first. Men will lie until their death bed unless you had cold hard facts, and even then, it's a toss-up. But who was I kidding? Some of these women get off on being the side chick. She could play along with this whole thing. I still had questions. I'd put two and two together later.

How long had she been the other woman? Did she even know he was married? Did she care? Where did they meet? Were they fucking? Like really fucking on the regular? What does she know about me? Anything at all? I wanted to know, and I wanted to know from her. Men had a way of twisting the truth. If a woman was in the mood to tell the truth, she'd tell everything.

Knee bobbing away. What would I say? I'm a planner, I needed a plan. Play by play. How would I say who I was and what I wanted without her hanging up?

I was Shirley, mane. I was about to call this woman up and confront her about my man, my husband.

I needed a moment. A drink. A smoke, and I don't even smoke. I needed to get my nerve up.

I stepped out into the garage, trying to shake off the jitters. Nerves were eating at me like Memphis mosquitos in June. It was too stuffy in the garage. I needed fresh air. I opened the garage and stepped out into the driveway. It was a beautiful day. Like fucking beautiful. I mean the sun was shining, there was slight breeze, and it was fucking 82 degrees in Memphis during the month of September. A fucking perfect day outside, but inside my chest is where the storm lived.

Finally, I was ready. It was like a game of Hide n' Seek: Ready or not, here it came.

I called the chick. "Is this..." no need to name names. She confirmed.

Fuck, fuck, fuck. My voice was cracking, and I knew she could hear it. Maybe I wasn't Shirley. I couldn't hold it together like she could. She was so calm, cool, and collected. She was, or seemed to be, so sure of herself. I felt like my mother was eavesdropping and would pop out any moment and scold me for stooping so low. She'd say something like, "Ain't no sense in even acting like she owes you nothin'. Stop making a fool of yourself and either you gone leave 'em or you ain't!" Then I could hear granny say, "Men folk gone be men folk. It's something wrong with all of 'em."

I kept going. "This is Keke." I paused for a moment to see if she would recognize the name. There was silence. I kept going. I was recently made aware that you and my...husband were communicating." Another pause. I waited for her to either hang up or interject. Neither happened. I kept going. "Woman to woman, can you tell me the nature of you all's conversation?" Fuck, fuck, fuck! I actually used the phrase "Woman to woman!" What was I thinking? She will definitely think I am a joke. This is a joke.

"What is your husband's name? I'm single, and well, I talk to quite a few men." She finally replied.

I paused. In my gut, I knew she was just buying time. She knew who I was talking about, she just wanted to be sassy.

I gave his name.

"Oh yeah," she said trying too hard to sound nonchalant. "We talk from time to time."

Now I was getting upset. She was trying to be...ugh. "What does that mean?" I asked. Trying to mask my irritation, not wanting this to go sour.

"It means what it means." She said in that whiney, southern, yet irritatingly ghetto voice she developed mid-way through the conversation.

"Well let me be clear," I said and then continued. "What type of conversation are you having with my husband? When and where did you all meet? Are you all fucking--"

She cut me off. "Hell yeah we fucking, we ain't in high school just holding the phone!"

I choked on those words and had nothing more to say. I stood there holding the phone, silent tears streaming down both cheeks.

I was sure she could hear this silent turmoil on the other end of the phone, but she continued. "We've been getting together since last year around April. But it really ain't nothing serious. He slides through every once in a while, and we do what we do. But you need to take this up with him, 'cause he ain't said nothing about a wife. He just said he be busy running his business and he ain't have time for nothing full time."

There it was. He hadn't told her he had a wife. He had lied like I didn't even exist. Had told her that she couldn't get more time because he was too busy running a business, the business that I had given up my time to help him get off the ground. My heart sank. It was beating like never before right in the pit of my stomach, tossing everything else around and up and down, so much so that the contents within had nowhere else to go but right up out of me. I felt the vomit tickle the back of my throat and I couldn't hold it anymore. I hung up the phone. She was still

talking, but I didn't care. I threw the phone to the ground as the contents of my soul erupted, leaving me empty. I stood there dry heaving, bent over at the waist for what seemed like a lifetime.

This shit hurt. Like really hurt. If he had at least told her about me, I could put some of the blame on her, call her a home wrecker. But this was all him. Trifling ass. Disrespectful ass.

COPYWRITE DEE GREER