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Meet Crying Macho Man
An interview with cartoonist Jose Cabrera

By Kat Avila | Web Published 3.1.2007

I was surfing the Net when I ran across a comic called "Crying Macho Man." With a title like that, the comic was just begging for me to take a look at it. I quickly added the comic to my favorites list and knew I wanted to talk to Mr. Crying Macho Man himself.



Web latinola.com

KA = Kat Avila for LatinoLA.com

JC = Jose Cabrera, aka Crying Macho Man

KA: Where did the title for your comic "Crying Macho Man" come from?

JC: I'd like to say it came from some divine intervention, where I mulled over it for months making sure it captured the essence of what I was trying to do, but actually it just popped into my head like a kernel - POP! Some things are easy!

KA: Your comic has been listed at OnlineComics.net since August 15, 2005. But, really, how long have you been working on "Crying Macho Man"?

JC: Before I started doing "Crying Macho Man," I had a series that was semi-autobiographical called "JOSE: Life According to Jose Cabrera." But it became tedious and boring to put my life down on paper week after week. So I began a series of absurd comic strips that I had actually started 15 years ago called "The Adventures of Abusive Step Father," where I would take clip art and add my own dialogue (tons of cartoonists are doing it today). But this time around I decided to draw the cartoons rather than use clip art. So I'd say CMM has been festering in my brain for 15 years, but technically it's been around for 3 years.

KA: How often is CMM updated?

JC: Weekly.

KA: Can you describe your cartoon style?

JC: My style - if you want to call it a style - has evolved constantly from drawing on a daily basis. And from time to time I'll enroll in a drawing class just to keep me honest. But the real secret to my so-called style is to vary the width of my line and make sure all the body parts are drawn correctly and in the right place (how embarrassing to put an ass on a face and a face on an ass - Hey, I just drew Bush). In the end, you grow into a style rather than try to force one.

KA: What motivates you to sit at the drawing board?

JC: Oh man, that's a good question! I love what I do. I mean it! I LOVE TO DRAW and LAUGH my ass off! I can draw cartoons all the livelong day and never show a soul and I'd be happy as a button, but then I started sharing my cartoons with a few friends and they in turn started sharing with their friends and their friends started sharing with ... you get the drift.

KA: Are you making any local appearances? Or will LatinoLA



readers have to fly up to San Francisco to see you at WonderCon 2007 (March 2-4) or at APE (Alternative Press Expo, April 21-22)?

JC: I'm courting a couple of bookstores to do a book signing as we speak, so check my calendar page on my Web site very soon! <http://www.cryingmachoman.com/contact.html>

KA: What will you be selling at your convention booths?

JC: I just published my first collection of cartoons called "The Premiere Crying Macho Man Collection: Prime Cut" (100 pp., Up and Over Publishing, \$9.95). So I'll be selling the book, some original prints, and some very cool T-shirts. And if you can't make to the conventions, you get them at my Web site: <http://www.cryingmachoman.com/store.html>

KA: Was that your parents or your grandparents that were from the Dominican Republic?

JC: My parents are from the D.R. I'm the first generation born here. My mom made sure I was born here, because she didn't want me to wait in long immigration lines. How thoughtful of her.

KA: How does growing up in a mostly Dominican neighborhood in Manhattan influence your creative work, if at all?

JC: My friends were mostly Dominican, my teachers were all Jewish, and my stepdad was/is a Pollock from Jersey who got a ticket every night for double-parking in front of our building. He was courting my mom at the time and thought he could get away with the tickets 'cause he was a "building inspector from Jersey." But he got busted and had to pay \$20,000 in unpaid tickets. Ouch!

So I have to say living in my Dominican neighborhood influenced me to look at things kind of cockeyed. And, by the way, for all you Red Sox fans, Manny Ramirez was born in the Dominican Republic but bred in my neighborhood - go Yankees!

KA: You moved to L.A. in 1999. How do you like your stay so far? Do you hang out with any of the local comic artists like Javier Hernandez of "El Muerto" fame?

JC: Los Angeles is a paradox much like "Crying Macho Man." It pretends to be green and lush, but on the inside it's just a plain old desert.

But L.A. has its moments. I like the music scene, and I love to trek out to Los Feliz/Silver Lake area for a drink or two.

Talking about drinks, I was supposed to hook up with Javier for a couple. Hey, Javier, if you're reading this, let's get some taquitos and cervezas.

KA: Can I ask one more question? I checked out the comics that were marked your favorites on OnlineComics.net. What do they have in common? What types of comics do you enjoy reading?

JC: I guess the common thread the "OnlineComics.net favorites" have is that they seem to tell me something about the writer's character. I connect instantly with a cartoon that has character and something to say about what's going on in the world, even if it's from a small place like "Doofy Comics" by Tim O'Brien.

I love to read comics that are well written, where the drawing is intentional (meaning when you put down a brush stroke you leave an undeniable mark), and the artist is trying to say something.

I enjoy social commentaries like Ted Rall and Steve Bell cartoons, absurd comics like "Get Your War On" by David Rees, and semi-autobiographical cartoons like "K Chronicles" by Keith Knight.

KA: Jose, thank you for talking to LatinoLA about your comic "Crying Macho Man," which readers can check out at your Web site at <http://www.cryingmachoman.com>

P.S. Jose Cabrera (Crying Macho Man) has got a book signing

Event: Crying Macho Man Book Signing Party

Where: The Venice Contemporary

When: Sunday March 18th, 2007 - 3:00pm to 6:00pm

Address: 12222 Venice Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90066

Refreshments will be served.

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