

GATEWAY TO THE GOULASH

Written by

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Open on a banged up pizza box sitting on park table.

SUPER: Beloit, Wisconsin, 10:30 A.M.

A figure wearing dark clothing walks towards the pizza box, out of focus. The figure walks up to the table- now in focus we see CLIVE KELLER, a private detective, dressed in a black suit and tie with a grey newsboy cap on his head. Keller reaches into the box. He opens the box, eyes widened.

KELLER

Hey, Chuck... you're gonna wanna see this.

A man, back turned to Keller, stands a ways away on top of a very small hill. We see his coat pocket up close as he pulls out a lighter and brings it up to a cigarette in his mouth. This is CHARLIE WALKER, chief private detective for the city of Beloit, WI. Fashionably dressed in a tan colored trench coat, white button down shirt and tie, and a dark brown fedora.

Walker walks over to the pizza box. Keller holds the box halfway open. Walker grabs a slice of pizza, slowly. The pizza's cheese clings to the rest of the pie. Walker holds it vertically at eye level, observing it. He winces with disgust.

WALKER

Good god...

Walker tosses the pizza onto the table. He walks out of frame.

We follow Walker as he reflects on the recent food combo massacres.

WALKER (V.O.)

That night we found the third in what we now know to be an expertly devised string of murders involving lethal food combinations.

(beat)

In this town, word spreads around fast. Folks here are scared to go out to eat at the local food establishments.

(CONTINUED)

WALKER (V.O.)

Some won't even open their
refrigerators and pantries in fear
of the sight of an unappetizing or
even fatal meal.

(beat)

A city that once had a bustling
night life now has been reduced to
a desolate ghost town. I need to
find this killer, and fast...

3

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

3

WALKER (V.O.)

The next morning I went down to the
local grocery store, inquiring of
any suspicious people purchasing
the ingredients found at each crime
scene--

Walker flicks his cigarette away and walks into the grocery
store, through a door labeled "ENTER". He immediately walks
out the door next to it labeled "EXIT".

WALKER (V.O.)

--No dice.

4

EXT. PARK TABLE - DAY

4

Keller sits at a circular table in downtown Beloit. Walker
arrives with two brown paper bags with their lunches. He
hands Keller a bag. Keller looks inside--

KELLER

Oh man, peanut butter and jelly
sandwich again? Why can't you make
something else--

WALKER

--Shut up and eat your lunch.

Walker takes a humongous bite of his sandwich.

5

INT. WALKER'S APARTMENT - DAY

5

Walker enters his home, hanging his coat and hat. The rotary
phone RINGS.

(CONTINUED)

WALKER (V.O.)
It was at the time when I arrived
back home that I got the call of
the killer's next ghastly
concoction.

Walker walks over to the phone and picks it up.

WALKER
Walker speaking.

He listens for a moment.

WALKER (CONT'D)
I'll be right there.

Walker hangs up the phone, grabs his coat and hat, and heads
right back out the front door.

6 INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

6

In a dark room at the crime scene, Walker walks towards a
table with a singular light fixated on something on the
table. He passes Keller, who's trying not to hurl. Walker
pats him on the back, and continues on.

As he is walking, he puts on a pair of white gloves.

There on the table sits an inconspicuous jar with a banana
peel resting on the top. Walker slowly takes the banana peel
off. He takes a good look inside. Appalled, he stumbles back
and launches the banana peel backwards towards Keller.

Walker catches his breath--

WALKER
Mayonnaise...

Walker takes another look in the jar. He notices an object
sitting inside.

WALKER (CONT'D)
Wait a minute...

Using his arm like a crane, Walker plucks the object from
within the jar--a SAUSAGE. He shows the sausage to Keller.

WALKER (CONT'D)
Oh my god! Look at this thing!

Keller cannot stand the sight, hurling off screen.

(CONTINUED)

7 INT. WALKER'S OFFICE

7

A cork board with a spread of photos of the killer's food combinations, ingredients, possible suspects, map locations, and newspaper clippings of the "Combo Killer".

Walker stares at the board, deep in contemplation. Out of nowhere he has the sausage evidence in hand and thinks--

WALKER (V.O.)
Is he calling us sausages?

Walker wiggles the sausage in front of him. He continues to examine the board, taking a bite out of the sausage.

CUT TO:

INT. WALKER'S APARTMENT - LATER

Walker sits fast asleep in his desk chair, legs across the top of his desk. At the front door--DING DONG.

Walker answers the door, and finds a peculiar package on the floor. He picks it up and unwraps it. It is a pair of shoes. Walker flips it upside down, his eyes widen.

Walker picks up the phone and dials a number.

WALKER
Hello. Keller? It's Walker. Things
just got a whole lot worse.

8 EXT. BELOIT PARK - DAY

8

Keller holds the package.

KELLER
"To my sweet sleuth."

Keller unwraps the package to reveal the shoe.

KELLER (CONT'D)
It's a shoe.

Charlie lights up a cigarette.

WALKER
Anything unusual about it?

Keller inspects the shoe. He flips it over and notices something underneath.

(CONTINUED)

KELLER
A piece of gum...

Keller looks to Walker, confused.

KELLER (CONT'D)
I don't understand.

WALKER
Gumshoe.

KELLER
Gumshoe?

WALKER
Yeah. Gumshoe.

Walker takes a drag.

WALKER (CONT'D)
The killer's calling us out.. Sick
bastard thinks it's some sort of
game... And we're just pawns.

KELLER
What's our next move, Chuck?

Walker takes another drag, and thinks about that.

WALKER
I got a hunch on who's behind all
of this. Keller, what day is it?

Keller checks his non-existent watch.

KELLER
It's Tuesday, Chief.

WALKER
...Taco Tuesday

KELLER
What?

WALKER
The killer's going to strike
tonight... And we need eyes on her
in haste!

POV following a woman, NINA BLACKWOOD, as she walks through
the streets.

(CONTINUED)

She looks around, concerned as if she is being followed. Nina does not see anyone, so she continues on her way. Walker and Keller cartoonishly tip-toe behind her.

As she walks, Nina notices an oddly placed little table underneath a street lamp post. She cautiously walks up to it, and sees a neatly placed taco on a plate with two condiment bottles next to it labeled: "Mustard" and "Taco Sauce".

Nina just stares at the bizarre plate of food. Then from the shadows a voice calls out--

WALKER (O.S.)
Any of those condiments look
appealing to you?

Startled, Nina looks up towards the source of the voice. Out of the darkness, Walker approaches Nina. Keller follows close behind.

NINA
Hello, Charlie.

Walker locks his eyes on Nina.

WALKER
Keller, this is Nina Blackwood...
my ex-wife.

Keller smiles and reaches his hand out to Nina.

KELLER
Glad to meet ya, Ms. Blackw--

Walker slaps Keller's arm.

WALKER
--Put your hand down.

Keller rubs his arm.

WALKER (CONT'D)
Wanna tell me why you're out here
this late at night?

NINA
If it's any of your business, I was
on my way home from work... Not
that you would know what it's like
to have a real job.

(CONTINUED)

WALKER
Let's cut the bologna. The jig is
up, Nina. Or should I call you: the
"Combo Killer"?

Nina is taken aback.

NINA
I've never massacred a single meal
in my entire life!

WALKER
Oh, so you're familiar with the
murders...

NINA
Everyone and their mother knows
about the murders.

WALKER
I don't suppose you have an alibi
for each one?

NINA
As a matter of fact, I do: my work!

Charlie lights a cigarette.

NINA (CONT'D)
What? You didn't bother checking my
punch card??

WALKER
Sure I did. But any sly dog like
you would be smart enough to figure
out a way to forge it.

NINA
You're absolutely mental, y'know
that!

Charlie grabs Nina's shoulders.

WALKER
Now listen here Nina; You've ruined
the appetites of the good people in
this city. Some will never see a
slice of pizza the same again!

NINA
(sarcastically)
Like the people here had any
tastebuds to begin with--

(CONTINUED)

Walker gives her the one-two slap on her face. Nina hangs her arm behind her back, winding up, and slaps Walker across his face. His cigarette goes flying. He rubs his cheek.

WALKER

Alright... I'll entertain the idea you were at work when each of the murders took place.

Nina rubs her shoulder.

WALKER (CONT'D)

But how do explain the package you sent me?

Nina looks puzzled.

NINA

Package? I never sent you a package.

WALKER

Don't play coy with me. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

NINA

No... I don't.

Walker puts up his hand and holds up one finger.

WALKER

One word: gumshoe.

NINA

Gumshoe? What are you talking about?

WALKER

Don't hurt yourself, sweetheart. Only you would write, "To my sweet sleuth".

Looking at the ground, Nina cannot believe what she hears.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Besides, you and Clive here are the only ones that know my address.

Nina looks up at Walker.

NINA

What- Clive here couldn't have done it?

(CONTINUED)

WALKER
Of course not. He's my partner.

Walker stares off to the side, and ponders the idea that maybe Keller is behind all of this. He begins to remember what Keller did at the crime scenes. Walker slowly does a double take at Keller.

WALKER (CONT'D)
(jokingly)
Keller... You wouldn't happen to be
the killer, would you?

Keller does not make eye contact with Walker.

WALKER (CONT'D)
Keller?

Keller jumps to grab the taco and mustard bottle, and he runs off into the dark.

10 EXT. BELOIT - NIGHT 10

A chase between Walker and Keller throughout Beloit, WI.

11 EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT 11

Realizing he is at his rope's end, Keller stops in the middle of a bridge. Walker gets to the end of the bridge, and catches his breath.

WALKER
Clive!

Looking at Walker, Keller pops open the bottle cap.

WALKER (CONT'D)
Clive, don't do it!

Keller licks his chops and squirts the entire bottle of mustard onto the taco.

Walker slowly makes his way towards Keller.

WALKER (CONT'D)
No! Stop! Don't you dare eat that!

Walker makes his way toward Keller. A drop of mustard hits the pavement in the foreground from the mustard smothered taco.

(CONTINUED)

WALKER (CONT'D)
 Just put the taco down... and let's
 talk about this over a nice, fancy
 lunch tomorrow. My treat.

Keller looks at the taco with desire in his eyes, then back
 to Walker.

WALKER (CONT'D)
 Does that sound good, Clive?

KELLER
 You're the best detective this town
 will ever see, Chief.

Keller brings the taco closer to his face.

WALKER
 Just take it easy, Clive!

Keller looks deep into Walker's eyes.

KELLER
 I'm sorry, Chuck...

WALKER
 Clive...

KELLER
 I'll see you on the other side.

WALKER
 Clive!!

His mouth like a vacuum, Keller completely inhales the
 dreadful taco.

Keller now lies dead on the pavement with mustard stains
 around his lips. Walker looks to the heavens, crying out in
 agony.

12 INT. DINER - MORNING

12

At a small diner, Walker reflects on the case with a cup of
 coffee--

WALKER (V.O.)
 It was on this day, three months
 ago, that Clive Keller took his own
 life. Death by repulsive food
 combinations. The "Combo Killer"
 was no more.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WALKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The town of Beloit, Wisconsin never really recovered from his reign of terror. Pizzerias closed down. Grocery stores were overstocked with mayonnaise, rotting away on shelves. Diners even took sausages off their breakfast menu. As for tacos... let's just say it's now called "Tamale Tuesday".

Walker takes a hard sip of his coffee.

WALKER (V.O.)

I find myself unable to shake what took place that night. His final words still swirling around my tired brain. Did he go crazy from all the stale, plain lunches I'd made us every day? Who knows... Alas, I draw no conclusion to why he did what he did. You think you know a guy after working so many years together.

(beat)

It just goes to show, you really don't know what your co-workers do off the clock... and maybe it should stay that way.

We leave off on Walker sipping his coffee, unable to shake what happened to him in Beloit, WI.

THE END

(CONTINUED)