

THE BEAR

"101"

Written by

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A CAGE

Directly in the middle of Orleans Street. Something trapped, locked away. A CREATURE whimpers, cries from inside. It moves only in a SQUARE, BROWN FUR sweeps between metal bars, body too big for the cell. Silent between whines. STEEL slivers of CHICAGO in the distant night. Nobody around until--

CARMY "THE BEAR" BERZATTO, 25 years old, strung out, apron around his waist, slowly approaches the cage...

CARMY

Shhh.... Shhh... it's okay...

The cage begins to ROCK back and forth with the CREATURE'S weight. Carmy nervously, slowly undoes the latch, opens the CAGE DOOR and QUICKLY BACKS UP. Then. After a moment...

CARMY

Come on... go...

The CREATURE emerges. A MASS OF DIRTY, MATTED HAIR. FOUR STOUT LEGS STRETCH, GRIME AND GORE AFFIXED TO SHARP CLAWS. MOUTH BLEEDING and ILL. Dog? Coyote? Whatever it is stands, shivers. Carmy bends to the ground. Stares at the creature. Silence. Then, the creature moves, walking only in a SQUARE.

CARMY

It's okay... it's okay...

The Creature stops, looks at Carmy, reveals sad, abused eyes. There was a cute animal in there once. Carmy nods...

CARMY

I know.

Carmy reaches to pet it, FANGS JUT FROM THE CREATURES MOUTH, GROWS INTO A NIGHTMARISH MONSTER, LUNGES AT CARMY JUST AS--

He wakes up violently, panting. Sits up, we're in--

INT. THE BEEF/KITCHEN - MORNING

The kitchen. He fell asleep on the prep table. Surrounded by STEEL. Stoves. Ovens. Pots. Pans. FIELDS of TOMATO CANS. SPEEDRACKS. Plates. Bowls. A BUZZ AT the front door, Carmy bolts up to the STOVE, STIRS A BOILING GRAVY POT, EXITS INTO--

INT. THE BEEF - CONTINUOUS

Threads the narrow pass between deep FRYERS, CONDIMENT STATIONS and CASH REGISTERS.

On the other side of the COUNTER resides old booths, RIPPED VINYL SEATS, BRIGHT OVERHEAD LIGHTS and CHECKERED FLOORS -- almost cute, save for the ULTIMATE BALLBREAKER arcade games in the corner screaming profanity. Carm opens the front door.

CARMY

Yo.

DELIVERY GUY

(hands Carm a receipt)  
Wrigleyville Meat.

CARMY

25 pounds? Supposed to be 200.

DELIVERY GUY

Take it up with Lu.

TITO - 50s, MORRISEY POMP - enters from the back with  
EBRAHEIM - 40s, HAIRNET, WHITE TANK TOP - as they CLOCK-IN.

TITO

What happen now?

CARMY

Nothing--

EBRAHEIM

Carmen, don't mess up our place.

CARMY

I got it.

Tito and Ebraheim quietly talk shit and laugh.

INT. THE BEEF/OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Carm's eyes LOCKED on an **EXPENSES SPREADSHEET** gripped by his TATTOOED fingers. Circled and underlined phrases like **LABOR, PAST DUE, OVEREXTENDED TERMS**. Phone to his ear, surrounded by FAMOUS CHEF ARTICLES AND COOKBOOKS, a framed picture of his **MOTHER** - smiling as she cuts the ribbon of "THE BEEF"...

CARMY

That's really nice of you,  
Luanne, but--

BALLBREAKER (O.S.)

ULTIMATE COCK ROCKER!

CARMY (CONT'D)

Sorry about that, we're grateful to  
still be open after everything --

BALLBREAKER (O.S.)

YOUR BALLS ARE MY BALLS NOW!

CARMY

(covers phone)

CAN SOMEBODY SHUT BALLBREAKER UP?... Look this is my second week and I'm still figuring out how Michael was doing everything. I know it's late and I want to make it good... Are you sure? There's nothing I can do? Not this one time?... I understand... I miss him too, thanks anyway.

(hangs up)

Fuck.

BALLBREAKER (O.S.)

YOUR BALLS HAVE BEEN BROKENNNNNN!

Carmy, pissed, explodes off the chair--

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carmy storms to THREE MACHINES, about to unplug them--

BALLBREAKERS

ULTIMATE BALLBREAKER!!! AHHYOOKENN!

TITO

No unplug! Ever.

CARMY

It's so loud--

TITO

You unplug, won't work again, too much people play.

CARMY

(beat)

When was the last you emptied this?

LATER

Carmy unscrews the CHANGE RECEPTOR, THOUSANDS OF QUARTERS SPILL OUT. PILES and PUDDLES of quarters. Then, an idea.

**A TWEET: BALLBREAKER TODAY @the-beef!!!! WINNER TAKE ALL TOURNAMENT! AN INSTA POST: TOTAL BALLBREAKER machines: "ONLY SPOT IN CHICAGO TO PLAY! TODAY ONLY"** (filter shifts)

EXT. THE BEEF - MORNING

Carmy sprints out, "THE BEEF" written above in BLUE, AN ANIMATED PHOTO OF **MICHAEL BERZATTO** (Carmy's older brother) next to the door, STAINS and TAGS on the windows.

CARMY (V.O.)  
*Chi-Chi, it's Carmy, you still got  
 the connect at Premiere Meat?*

EXT. WELLS ST - MORNING

Carmy runs, winded, L TRAIN WHIPS ABOVE HIM--

INT. CARMY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Sprints up the stairs--

INT. CARMY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Busts in through his EMPTY studio and B-LINES to the closet, unlocks the door with a key to reveal STACKS OF SHOE BOXES.

EXT. ORLEANS STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Carmy whips around the corner lugging two GIANT GARBAGE BAGS over his shoulder, like a deranged Santa Claus--

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

Carmy stands as CHI-CHI, jumpsuit & Jordans, white gloves, pulls SHOE BOXES from the bags, rapidly removes LID AFTER LID AFTER LID: YEEZY'S/UNION'S/JORDAN'S/etc, intensely inspects.

CHI-CHI  
 We got issues. Where's the limited?

CARMY  
 You're lookin' at the limited.

CHI-CHI  
 Lookin' at reissues and samples.

CARMY  
 Since when?

CHI-CHI  
 Since these got *reissued* in 2012  
 and these say "SAMPLE".

CARMY

Add this...

Carmy hands him a giant CRYOVAC'D sack of QUARTERS--

CHI-CHI

What am I am a Coinstar?

CARMY

Chi-Chi, that's like 4 hundo--

CHI-CHI

Okay, so that bullshit plus two Off-White 1's and a pair of Union 4's.

CARMY

Or a pair of the "Duck 3s"?

CHI-CHI

You got Oregon Duck 3's?

CARMY

I got Duck 3's.

CHI-CHI

Boom.

CARMY

Boom.

Chi-chi opens the trunk, pulls a HUGE COOLER-- IT INSTANTLY FALLS, HITS THE GROUND, BLOOD SPRAYS SHOE BOXES--

CARMY (CONT'D)

Whoa! Watch it, asshole.

CHI-CHI

Who cares? They're just reissues.

INT. THE BEEF/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

STOVE TOP FLAME ignites. Carm FLIPS open the coolers, BLOODY MEAT inside. He lifts RIBS, slams 'em to the butcher block. SHITTY KNIFE pulled as Carm performs surgery. Quick strikes, precise carves. Shapeless heaps transform to GORGEOUS ROASTS--

Carmy does a hundred things at once; CHOPS onions, carrots, and garlic, stirs a GIANT GRAVY POT, breaks down celery and herbs, POURS RED WINE BOTTLES into ROASTING RACKS, BOILS VEAL STOCK, STIRS GRAVY POT AGAIN. ROASTED BONES & APRICOTS thrown into the ROASTING RACKS, SEARS MEAT in the pan, OVEN doors OPENED, hotel trays SHOVED IN, oven doors SHUT, timers turn.

SEARED BEEF scraps land into the GRAVY POT, Carmy doses it in water, flame goes to high. He grabs the phone, dials--

CARMY

Sugar, I need help. Not like that... I need the shoes Michael gave me... I gotta show a collector that's in town. Not Chi-Chi. Can you bring em to The Beef? I can meet ya halfway... Please? I promise you it's not what you think... Thank you.

He hangs up, then--

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Hello?

Carmy startled, SYDNEY at the kitchen entrance. 30s, knife bag around her shoulder, chef-whites.

CARMY

Scared me.

SYDNEY

I'm sorry. Carmy?

CARMY

Yeah, what's up?

SYDNEY

I'm Sydney. I called about the Sous position. You said I could stage--

CARMY

Oh my god, of course, sorry, I forgot. Nice to meet you.

SYDNEY

(hands him a resume)  
You asked me to bring this...

CARMY

Thanks... Alinea, Smoque, Avec. Wow, those are serious spots... So what are you doing here?

SYDNEY

Not many spots left.

CARMY

(off resume)  
Where's UPS? Chicago?

SYDNEY  
United Parcel Service.

CARMY  
That UPS. What'd you do there?

SYDNEY  
Driver.

CARMY  
Bet you know the city well.

SYDNEY  
Too well... but it paid for  
Culinary School.

CARMY  
CIA?

SYDNEY  
CIA.

CARMY  
Heard... we're open 3-10 everyday.  
In the shits from 6 to 9.

SYDNEY  
Heard.

CARMY  
You know the drill, make family?  
Meat plus 3 or one and a half. We  
eat around 2.

SYDNEY  
Yes, Chef. You ran EMP right?

CARMY  
Yep.

SYDNEY  
What was it like running the best  
restaurant in the world?

CARMY  
Like dismantling a bomb on a tilt-a-  
whirl.

SYDNEY  
(understands)  
So what are you doing here?

CARMY  
Hopefully the opposite.



INT. THE BEEF - MOMENTS LATER

Carm storms in, the door chimes. Tito refills SODA machine. Ebraheim diligently wipes down the counter...

EBRAHEIM  
Carmen, where is beef!?

CARMY  
Relax, it's in the oven.

Carmy leaps over the counter, TRIPS, FALLS TO THE OTHER SIDE.

SHIT!! CARMY (O.S.) (CONT'D) TITO  
Need more fennel.

CARMY (CONT'D)  
Yes, Chef. Can you start a new giardinera?

TITO  
Later.

CARMY EBRAHEIM  
We won't need it later-- Carmen, when beef ready?

CARMY (CONT'D)  
We're doing things a little differently today, okay? Beef's almost done, cut potatoes, please, Chef--

EBRAHEIM  
Carmen, onions first, we have system.

CARMY  
But you gotta soak the potatoes and then freeze em--

EBRAHEIM  
Carmen, after onions, don't mess up our place--

Tito goes to move CARMY'S GRAVY POT--

CARMY  
CHEF, NO! DON'T TOUCH THE GRAVY, PLEASE? I don't care if you don't listen to me about anything else, please don't touch that, I've been reducing that for 12 hours.

(MORE)

CARMY (CONT'D)  
 (moves through swinging  
 doors, SHOUTS)  
 CORNER--

Enters into the--

INT. THE BEEF/BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

Bakery. MARCUS - 20s, gold chains and a beanie - kneads...

CARMY  
 Marcus, we're gonna need a double  
 order of bread today, okay Chef?  
 (no response)  
 Hello?

MARCUS  
 Yes?

CARMY  
 Did you hear me?

MARCUS  
 I've been tellin' you for two weeks  
 the mixer's fucked and I gotta mix  
 all this shit by hand--

CARMY  
 We're not meeting dailies, vendors  
 are cutting us off and I don't have  
 the money to fix it right now. I'm  
 gonna get you a mixer, I promise--  
 (BUZZER sounds)  
 That's the beef. Give me a hand?

Carmy turns back through the counter doors, Marcus follows--

INT. THE BEEF/COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

They weave between Tito and Ebraheim. Sydney puts on a fresh  
 apron near the back.

CARMY/MARCUS  
 CORNER!/BEHIND!/BEHIND!

Carm straightens HOT DOG BOATS, EYES THE CLOCK...

CARMY  
 Smaller fry scoops today, Chef.

TITO  
 No. Not system.

EBRAHEIM  
Carmen, there is a woman.

CARMY  
What's this system?? That's Sydney,  
she's working with us today.

MARCUS  
It's Michael's system.  
(to Sydney)  
I'm Marcus, nice to meet you.

SYDNEY  
Nice to meet you.

CARMY  
Michael's system makes no  
sense.

MARCUS  
So say something.

CARMY  
Isn't this saying something?

EBRAHEIM  
Marcus, I say something-- you are  
my favorite bitch.

MARCUS  
English is gettin' tight, Zeebs.  
You kidnapping ship Captains?

Sydney tucks herself into a corner, sets up a cutting board.

EBRAHEIM  
Marcus mom teach me as we sex.

MARCUS  
OH SHIT YES! PLAYA'S  
LEARNING!

CARMY  
Tito, cut the bread one inch  
shorter please, Chef.

TITO  
No. Not system.

CARMY (CONT'D)  
(to Sydney)  
I'm sorry in advance for the  
people that work here.

GARY SWEEPS, 50s, homeless, enters, ties on an apron...

SWEEPS  
YAH, YAAAH, YAAAAH! WOOH-HA!

ALL  
What up, Family/Yo, yo,  
Sweeps...

Sweeps hugs Marcus, then the crew, but not Carmy...

CARMY  
Morning, Chef, do me a favor? Set  
up a compost next to the trash?

SWEEPS  
I need my grease-cutters first.

CARMY  
Tomorrow, tomorrow--

SWEEPS  
I heard that song yesterday.  
Motherfuckers be careful in front  
of the stove, family. Shitload-a-  
grease in that bitch, gonna get HOT  
HOT HOT!!! Carmy's got no problem  
with that.

Carm and Marcus exit through the KITCHEN DOORS.

CARMY/MARCUS	SYDNEY
CORNER!	(to Tito)
	Chef, is there a family shelf?

Shelf?	TITO	EBRAHEIM
		(moves SPEEDRACK) BEHIND.

SYDNEY  
Like a... comida extra que usa para  
la comida familiar?

TITO  
Si, en el cajon inferior del  
frigorifico.

SYDNEY  
Gracias, Jefe.

TITO  
(nods)  
Jefe.

INT. THE BEEF/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The oven & prep room. Carm and Marcus slam on OVEN MITTS.

CARMY  
1... 2...3..

Oven doors fly open, lightning fast, rack after rack pulled,  
quickly, efficiently, it's almost beautiful...

MARCUS  
(off heat)  
Fuck/fuck/fuck/fuck.

CARMY (CONT'D)  
(off heat)  
Fuck/fuck/fuck/fuck.

Racks laid on the stove top, each ROAST A BEAUTIFUL  
CAMELIZED BROWN. They shut the BLAZING HOT oven doors...

CARMY (CONT'D)  
Tent it quick, Chef.

MARCUS  
This doesn't look how it normally  
looks.

CARMY  
Trust me...

RICHIE (O.S.)  
CORNER.

HUGE sheets of TIN FOIL ripped, TENTED over the beef. RICHIE  
KALINOWSKI, 40, ASSHOLE, BEEF t-shirt, enters, hugs Marcus...

MARCUS  
Yo, family.

RICHIE  
Cousin, you fuckin' up my program?

CARMY  
Thought you'd be here 4 hours ago.

Carm fastens foil to the pans, glances at THE CLOCK. Richie  
kisses Marcus's cheek. Richie gives no love to Carm.

RICHIE  
Had the kid all morning. My Insta's  
blowing up, what are you up to with  
Ballbreaker?

CARMY  
We need business. Nerds come here  
from Rockford to play it--

RICHIE  
In 1987, when you weren't alive.  
You have to run stuff by me first--

CARMY  
I don't HAVE to do shit--

Carm moves into the--

INT. THE BEEF/FRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Walk-in fridge. Richie follows--

RICHIE  
Yo, I'm talkin' to you--  
(off Sydney)  
Fuck's this?

SYDNEY  
I'm Sydney. I'm Staging.

RICHIE  
You're whating?

CARMY  
She's helping us out today.

SYDNEY  
There's random strawberries, were  
you saving these?

CARMY  
All you.

RICHIE  
Yeah, please, this asshole was  
using 'em to make a giant muffin.

CARMY  
It was a play on a Pannetone that  
woul'da been beautiful if you let me  
finish it--

RICHIE  
And this is a play on fuck you.  
(flicks Carmy's balls)

CARMY  
COUSIN.

RICHIE  
(then, to Sydney)  
Richard Kalinoski. Nice to meet  
you, sweetheart.

... hi.

SYDNEY

CARMY  
Don't say "sweetheart" you  
fuckin' weirdo.

RICHIE  
You're so woke, Carm. Meant nothing  
by it, Sydney. Saying "sweetheart"  
is part of our Italian heritage.

SYDNEY  
 Heard.  
 CARMY  
 You're about as Italian as  
 McDonald's.

Sydney exits with a bunch of stuff. Carm grabs armful after  
 armful of FRESH PRODUCE--

RICHIE  
 Okay, I'm not done talking to you.

CARMY  
 I don't have time for this--

RICHIE  
 When I'm talkin' to you, stop and  
 listen and don't start doin' a  
 million things like a smartass.  
 The guys are texting me you wanna  
 cut the bread shorter. If you wanna  
 stretch ingredients, use more gravy  
 and less beef. The bread is cheap  
 and the gravy is easy, understand--

CARMY  
 That's incorrect--

RICHIE  
 Don't go around fuckin' their heads  
 up and doing weird shit and hiring  
 women without asking me. I'm the  
 general manager and this is your  
 brother's house.

CARMY  
 Why didn't he leave it to you then?

That stung. They stare, Marcus enters, kills the tension.

MARCUS  
 Low on olive oil, fyi--

CARMY  
 Heard.

Carmy shoves an armful of vegetables into Richie's chest,  
 escapes the fridge. Richie and Marcus follow into the--

INT. THE BEEF/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Prep area, armfuls of VEG spill on to the table. Richie and  
 Marcus rinse produce, dry and then peel 'em.

CARMY

Can somebody grab me a knife? A sharp one, please! TITO, WE NEED A POT FOR THE GIARDINERA, CHEF!

RICHIE

"Chef". Kill me. I wonder if Bobby Flay here wasn't runnin' around the farmers market like a nouveau-riche-ass-bitch, we wouldn't be having money problems--

CARMY

Tito-- did you take my knife!?

TITO (O.S.)

Yes.

CARMY

Why??

TITO (O.S.)

System.

RICHIE

System.

CARMY

(to Richie)

Don't call me Bobby Flay. SYDNEY!

SYDNEY

Yes, chef?

CARMY

(grabs a shitty knife out of a drawer)

Stir that pot for me?

SYDNEY

Yes, chef. Want a cartouche on it?

CARMY

Please. Thank you, Chef.

RICHIE

What in the fuck is a cartoonsh?

Carmy starts chopping vegetables without looking down. Sydney cuts a PARCHEMENT cartouche, places over GRAVY.

CARMY (CONT'D)

What's our best day here?

RICHIE

Like 5. It's making me feel crazy watching you, slow down--



CARMY  
If we did 6 today that'd get us  
through the week. Hence,  
ballbreaker.

RICHIE  
Hence, eat shit.

Carmy watches Sydney swiftly break down the strawberries,  
fennel and onion. Impressive. TITO sets a POT on the counter.

TITO  
BEHIND, BEHIND, NO TOQUE,  
CALIENTE.  
(exits)  
CORNER.

RICHIE (CONT'D)  
Why don't you make it easy on  
yourself: make the spaghe--

\*

CARMY  
Don't say the spaghetti.  
(throws knife in sink)  
All these knives are dull.

MARCUS  
What's the spaghetti?

RICHIE  
Before your time. Spaghetti was our  
biggest seller forever. Mikey was  
the only one that could make it but  
I suspect Carm *can* but he's too  
fancy now so he won't--

CARMY  
I won't make it cuz I don't know  
how to make it--

MARCUS  
How hard is spaghetti, Carmy?

RICHIE  
Yeah like for real.

CARMY  
Do you know how it make it?

\*

RICHIE (CONT'D)  
I'm no "chef" but it can't possibly  
be that hard.

CARMY  
I didn't say it was *hard*, I said I  
didn't know how to make it and I  
say "chef" because in real kitchens  
it's a sign of respect for staff to  
address each other as "Chef".

Richie grabs RENE REDZEPI'S NOMA cookbook off the counter--

RICHIE

This crap is making you delusional  
and pompous and a gayrod. Learn how  
to cook with ants all you want but  
if don't know how to make pasta--

CARMY

You guys just can't listen to me?

MARCUS

I mean, you probably should learn  
how to make pasta, Carmy--

CARMY

Fuck the spaghetti, Fak's gonna  
raise BALLBREAKER plays to a buck.

Carmy sees Sydney HUSTLING, appreciates the work ethic...

MARCUS

Who's Fak?

Carm moves the HOT POT, BURNS THE SHIT OUT OF HIS HAND---

CARMY

FUCK. SOMEBODY GRAB ME A  
KNIFE??

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What's "Fak"?

\*

RICHIE

Neil Fak. This stroke's friend.  
(holds hand over BEEF)  
Whoa, whoa, why's the beef so hot?

MARCUS

Cuz we just took it out--

RICHIE

*2 hours late?! It's gonna be dry--*

RICHIE (CONT'D)

You're striking the fuck out  
today, batter.

CARMY

It's not 2 hours late, it  
takes 2 hours longer and if  
you would have let me explain  
before you got in my face  
about it, Wrigley didn't  
deliver enough this morning--

RICHIE (CONT'D)

Why didn't they deliver enough?

CARMY

Because we're short. *That's why* we're doing the tourney. The only beef I could get on short notice was short rib and you can't roast short rib, you gotta braise it which takes longer--

RICHIE

Which is not at all how we've ever made a beef here.

TITO (O.S.)

System.

RICHIE

System, baby.

Tito hustles in, dabs Richie. Carmy glances at THE CLOCK.

CARMY

BUT it's three dollars less per pound and I can stretch it, which is why I wanted to use smaller pieces of bread so the sandwich looks fuller and we aren't wasting gravy, which is actually more time consuming to make and more expensive because we're using twice the amount of produce and labor--

RICHIE

Don't talk to me about labor, Noma--

CARMY

Thought it was your house.

RICHIE

Fuck all this. YO LISTEN UP! Nobody cut bread shorter. We're using MORE gravy, LESS bullshit beef. Don't listen to this fuckface.

Richie exits. Carmy sinks, his eyes meet Sydney's. She politely looks away, pretending not to have overheard.

Carmy peels back the TIN-FOIL to reveal the braised beef, grabs a FORK, pulls the beef APART beautifully.

CUT TO:

AN ELECTRICAL PANEL slammed shut. BLUE TAPE TABS labeled "one buck" cover ".50" slots.

NEIL FAK - Dickies Jumpsuit, Hackman's glasses from THE CONVERSATION, 25, CIGARETTE IN HIS MOUTH - turns his head from the TOTAL BALLBREAKER machine...

FAK

Buck won't get them very far.

INT. THE BEEF/DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Carm and Fak in front of the BALLBREAKERS. Sweeps whistles, wipes the cafeteria table in the middle of the small room.

CARMY

(already annoyed)

Fak, that's the point! This game is already ultra confusing.

FAK

Exactly, it's a Norwegian knockoff of Mortal Kombat that they never finished properly, part of why they recalled these machines, aside from the excessive violence, was that it's too hard to play because it makes little sense story-wise. Also, d'you get the flowers my family sent--

CARMY

(impatient, off clock)

How long is this gonna take?

FAK

Hour?

CARMY

Gotta be faster than that. Sweeps, can you get the back windows when you get a minute, Chef?

SWEEPS

Grease-cutters. Then the windows.

CARMY

K, do whatever the fuck you want.

SWEEPS

Chill.

FAK

Carm, you're bleeding.

Fak nods to Carmy's finger -- which is GUSHING BLOOD.

CARMY  
 (suddenly hurts like hell)  
 SHIT! It was that dull-ass knife.

FAK  
 I'm getting woozy looking at it.

Carm grips his hand, stands, quickly turns a corner -- SLAMS INTO EBRAHEIM, who drops a tray of sausage.

CARMY  
 GOD DAMMIT, GET THE FUCK OUTTA THE WAY, EBRAHEIM.

EBRAHEIM  
 CARMEN! Your fault! Say "Corner"!

INT. THE BEEF/STAFF BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carm, wraps a band-aid around his cut, glances at a FRAMED BLUEPRINT hung above the toilet. A REINTERPRETED VISION OF THE BEEF, A HIGH-END DINER, the restaurant of Carmy's dreams. A sketch on the window, an animal's face. The **CREATURE** from the opening, now clearly seen as a BEAR.

Carmy combs his hand through his hair, wipes FLOUR from his cheek and arm. He looks tired and fried, glances at THE CLOCK. We HEAR it tick, tick, tick, tick. Drown out ALL other noise. Carm momentarily frozen. Then. A text BUZZES, SUGAR: down the street.

INT. THE BEEF/KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Sydney breaks up GROUND BEEF in a mixing bowl, seasons it, rapidly adds five eggs in, SEASONS again with BREAD CRUMBS, PARM and CHOPPED PARSLEY...

RICHIE (O.S.)  
 ... Marcus, why don't you shut the fuck up and suck my dick....

Richie moves directly to Sydney's work station, stands right behind her, reaches above her for a MIXING BOWL--

RICHIE (CONT'D)  
 Excuse me, doll--

Richie moves his hand to her waist to guide her out of his way, SYDNEY INSTANTLY and STARTLINGLY BLOCKS it with her elbow, meatloaf flung to the wall.

RICHEL (CONT'D)  
                   (laugh, grab bowl)  
 Easy tiger, just grabbing a bowl...

Richie exit, whistling. Sydney wipe the wall off.

EXT. CORNER OF ORLEANS & DEARBORN - EVENING

SUGAR - 20s, business suit, CHICAGO NATIONAL BANK PIN - stands, AIR JORDAN box under her arm, tiniest amount of a TATTOO near her neck, JUST ABOVE her collar. Carmy turn, a corner, see the SHOE BOX, instantly upset--

                  CARMY  
 You're carrying those around like  
 that?? Come on, Sugar--

He grab them, PULLS THEM CLOSE to his CHEST, his baby...

                  SUGAR  
 That's how you say hello?! You know  
 how ridiculous it is that I'm  
 carrying around shoes for you--

                  CARMY  
 I'm sorry... Hi. Hello.

                  SUGAR  
 Hi. Hello.

Quiet. Thrilled to see him, destroyed by his appearance, including his bloodied hand. They hug, she doesn't let him go. After a moment.

                  SUGAR (CONT'D)  
 You look terrible, are you on dru--

                  CARMY  
 Don't start with that shit, Sugar,  
 like you're a god damn angel.

She turn, walk away. Carmy pace with her...

                  CARMY (CONT'D)  
 Wait/wait/wait... I'm tired.  
 Restaurant's kicking my ass. That's  
 it. I swear. I'm good... Okay?

She stop. Beat. She comb his hair back, lovingly.

                  SUGAR  
 I've been calling you.

CARMY  
I know, I just...

SUGAR  
It's okay... I hate your tattoos.

CARMY  
Thanks, sick Celctic Knots.

She smiles, about to come back at him, then--

PASSERBY #2 (O.S.)  
HOW MUCH FOR THEM Js YO??!!

CARMY  
How about 60 pounds of prime rib!

PASSERBY #2 (O.S.)  
What?

SUGAR  
(shakes head, off shoes)  
"Just showing my collector friend".

CARMY  
Thank you for bringing them, I  
really appreciate it, I gotta--

SUGAR  
Wait, I have to tell you something.

CARMY  
What?

SUGAR  
Cicero called.

CARMY  
And?

SUGAR  
He wants to buy the restaurant.

CARMY  
It's not for sale.

SUGAR  
That's what I wanted to tell you.

CARMY  
That it's not for sale?

SUGAR  
That you should sell it to him.

CARMY  
And he flips it into an Applebee's?

She takes a second, fights back emotion.

CARMY (CONT'D)  
Are you okay?

SUGAR  
Why happened at EMP?

CARMY  
... Pay was bullshit, I couldn't  
afford to work there--

SUGAR  
I was your emergency contact. They  
said you had a breakdown and  
punched somebody??

CARMY  
That's not at all how it went down--

SUGAR  
*And put his clothes on an anti-  
griddle?*

CARMY  
I gotta go--

SUGAR  
They were worried, Carmy. Wait, I  
know how hard the last couple of  
months have been for you.

CARMY  
And for you--

SUGAR  
What is an anti-griddle?

CARMY  
Freezes instead of heats.

SUGAR  
Makes sense.  
(beat)  
I'm not sure the restaurant is the  
best place for you. I know what it  
did to Michael and I don't want--



CARMY

That won't happen. First off, I'm not on drugs and secondly no one that works there listens to, like, literally *anything* I say.

SUGAR

That's probably a good thing, means you're not screaming and throwing tantrums like an infant.

CARMY

Was Michael like that?

SUGAR

He was a maniac. That place is contagious and vile and there's so many weird, bad vibes pumping through it. That shit gets into you. Let it go.

CARMY

Natalie, I'm good at this.

SUGAR

I know you are, honey.

CARMY

And I'll fix it.

SUGAR

Nobody's asking you to.

CARMY

I gotta run. Thanks for the shoes. I love you, Bear.

SUGAR

Love you too, Bear.

INT. THE BEEF/OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Richie scans the pantry, which has been BEAUTIFULLY ORGANIZED and labeled with perfectly CUT STRIPS OF GREEN TAPE.

RICHIE

Fuck are these labels. Marcus?!

MARCUS (O.S.)

What?

RICHIE

Where are the chili flakes? This is the most Polish shit ever. Cousin organizes and it's more confusing--

MARCUS

(enters, points)

There. Labeled "Red Chilli Flake".

Richie storms out, knocks a book over on the way out. Marcus picks up the book, it's the FRENCH LAUNDRY cookbook, a photo slides out and on to the floor: Carmy, then 21, in a white apron, proud, holding an EATER RISING YOUNG CHEF award, embraced by THOMAS KELLER. Marcus delicately puts the picture back, adds the book to the stack.

INT. THE BEEF/KITCHEN - LATER

Carmy enters, reties his apron, glances at Sydney's pan -- the strawberries have reduced into a dark red molasses.

CARMY

Strawberry Sofrito?

SYDNEY

Yes, Chef.

Carmy grabs a TASTING SPOON, dips it in, tastes it, nods.

CARMY

That's fire, Chef.

He throws the spoon in the sink, moves deeper into the kitchen. Ebraheim, Tito, Marcus and Richie bullshit around, occassionally stirring pots. Carmy pulls a pencil from behind his ear, jots a couple notes down, looks at THE CLOCK--

CARMY (CONT'D)

Alright team, let's do a line up, service in a hour. We need to dedicate a garde manger--

TICK TICK TICK. KITCHEN NOISE swells around it--

RICHIE

... and like who gives a shit really but the guy's in my face and, Tito, you're gonna love this, I look at him--

CARMY (CONT'D)

Tick, tick tick...

RICHIE (CONT'D)  
And i'm like if you pull that  
shit again we're gonna have  
real problems-

CARMY (CONT'D)  
Yo... seriously... I want to  
start defining roles a little  
bit more clearly around  
here... hello?... Guys--

Tick, tick, tick...

MARCUS  
And was this the same guy  
from the hot dog stand--

CARMY (CONT'D)  
Marcus--

RICHIE  
Turns out it was his twin brother--

Tick, tick, tick...

MARCUS  
Word???

CARMY  
Guys, seriously--

RICHIE  
Cousin, we're trying to get some  
real work done here bro, capiche?  
We don't need a speech, dipshit.  
(then)  
So the fuckin' guy comes back with,  
like, a revolver, and I'm like,  
what are you a private detective--

Carmy looks above the stovetop, a framed photo of Michael  
cooking, he moves his eyes down into the GRAVY POT. RAGING,  
BOILING BEEF FAT has soaked into the CARTOUCHE. Tick, tick,  
tick, tick. THEN...

CARMY PICKS UP THE GRAVY POT AND THROWS IT AT THE WALL.  
SCARING THE SHIT OUT OF EVERYONE. HOT GRAVY SPRAYS EVERYWHERE

ALL  
WHAT THE FUCK/JESUS, CARMY!

A DEMENTED SMIRK ON CARMY'S FACE AS HE KICKS OVER A PREP  
TABLE, UNHINGED.

CARMY  
NONE OF YOU MOTHERFUCKERS WANNA  
LISTEN? YOU WANNA RUN THIS PLACE  
LIKE SHIT? YOU WANT THE FOOD TO  
TASTE LIKE SHIT? YOU WANNA BE  
FUCKIN' LAZY? FUCK YOU. NONE OF YOU  
FUCKIN' LOSERS HAVE ANY SENSE-A-  
FUCKIN-URGENCY!

(MORE)

CARMY (CONT'D)  
 YOUR SYSTEM IS FUCKING STUPID. I  
 CAN DO THIS SHIT IN MY SLEEP. YOU  
 DON'T WANNA CUT THE BREAD SHORT?  
 YOU WANNA USE MORE GRAVY? WELL  
 GUESS WHAT, FUCKOS? NO MORE GRAVY.

Gets right into Richie's face. Carmy looks different. Is he enjoying this? Scary. Rabid. An animal. Richie terrified, but hiding it.

CARMY (CONT'D)  
 So, now, we have to cut the fuckin'  
 bread shorter and we're gonna use  
 more beef and you're gonna clean  
 that fuckin' shit up.

Carmy blows out in a huff. The crew is silent, stunned. Then.

MARCUS  
 That was like seeing an 85 pound  
 white dude on meth lift up a car.

RICHIE  
 (quiet)  
 Baby.

He goes to pick up the gravy pot, burns his hand.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Carmy vomits behind a dumpster. Breathes, leans against the wall. Sydney exits the kitchen, hands him a DELI of water.

CARMY  
 Thanks. I'm really sorry.

SYDNEY  
 Nothing I haven't seen, nothing I  
 haven't heard. Get the reaction you  
 wanted?

CARMY  
 We'll see I guess.  
 (beat)  
 What was your favorite route?

SYDNEY  
 Route?

CARMY  
 Like when you were driving, did you  
 have a... route or road you liked?

SYDNEY

Sheridan Road. Along the Lake. When  
Rogers Park turns into Evanston.  
Near Northwestern. Very chill.

Beat. Carmy nods to the kitchen.

CARMY

I don't wanna be like that.

SYDNEY

In my experience, either you are or  
you aren't.

CARMY

Heard.

She walks back to the restaurant. Carmy takes a sip.

INT. THE BEEF/KITCHEN - LATER

Richie cleans the wall. Tito and Ebraheim start service prep.  
Sweeps wipes the tables. Sydney takes a BEAUTIFUL meatloaf  
out of the oven. Carmy storms in, Richie doesn't look at him.

SWEEPS

Damien's back.

Carm's voice hoarse, he tries to keep control, momentum--

CARMY

We're testing the new sandwich!

picks up the roasting rack of Beef, quickly exits into--

INT. THE BEEF/COUNTER - LATER

The counter, slams the rack into the STEAMER--

CARMY

MARCUS, ROLL, PLEASE, CHEF!

A ROLL FLIES into frame, Carm inspects, feels dense.

CARMY (CONT'D)

CRUMB'S TOO SMALL, IT'S HEAVY!

MARCUS (O.S.)

DOING IT BY HAND!

Carmy looks into the ROLL, pokes his finger into it, rips a  
piece off. It CRUMBLES. He runs to the back door...

INT. THE BEEF/BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

And pokes his head into the bakery...

MARCUS

It's the mixer--

CARMY

Shut up, it's not the mixer.  
There's no chew, it's crumbly.  
Oven's too dry. Fill a baking sheet  
with water, put in on the oven  
floor, throw a new batch in. DO IT.

Carmy grabs a new roll and runs back to the--

INT. THE BEEF/COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

Carmy pulls the roll open, forks SHORT RIB on the roll, DIPS  
THE SANDWICH INTO THE JUS, SPOONS CELERY-GIARDINIERA ON TOP.

CARMY

YO, somebody try this. Richie?

RICHIE (O.S.)

Shove it up your ass.

MARCUS

(runs in, takes a bite)  
Holy shit. Sweeps, hit this now!

Carmy looks at the Clock. Then Sweeps takes a bite...

SWEEPS

Yoooooo... Tito? Ebra?..

Tito and Ebraheim run in, both take bites.

CARMY

What do you think?

EBRAHEIM

Carmen, you threw gravy like baby.  
The beef be better with gravy.

CARMY

Heard. Tito?

TITO

(eyes wide)  
New system.

Tito high fives Carm. Richie watches from the bakery window.

INT. THE BEEF/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Sydney spoons STRAWBERRY SOFRITO over a SIZZLING MEATLOAF, GLAZING it. Sweeps brings her some of the sandwich.

SWEEPS  
Try this business.

SYDNEY  
(takes a bite)  
Oh... WOW.

SWEEPS  
You know that's *bangin*.

SYDNEY  
*Bangin*.

SWEEPS  
How you gonna pass the family test,  
kid? Delicious or impressive?

SYDNEY  
Delicious is impressive.

SWEEPS  
Word.

Then, Sweeps sees FIVE GIANT COSTUMED ADULTS out the window.

SWEEPS (CONT'D)  
What... the... sweet hell...

EXT. THE BEEF/COUNTER - MOMENTS LATER

Richie makes sure no one's looking, takes a bite of the sandwich. His face drops, pissed it's DELICIOUS.

RICHIE  
Fuck me.

He angrily throws the sandwich in the garbage, then, looks out the window and sees a LONG LINE OF COSPLAYERS forming...

EXT. THE BEEF - MOMENTS LATER

Carmy worried, looks at A TWO BLOCK-LONG LINE OF HEADBANGERS, GANGBANGERS, AND COSTUMED DWEEBS (WIZARDS/DEMONS/DRAGONS). Fak, Sweeps, Marcus and Tito appear at his side...

SWEEPS  
Shit yes...

TITO  
That man look like a carrot.

FAK  
Is it a carrot?

MARCUS  
Or an orange dick?

CARMY  
That's too many people. We're gonna  
need more bread.

INT. THE BEEF/BAKERY - AFTERNOON

Fak stands with Marcus in front of the MIXER...

MARCUS  
It's all fly until it starts doin'  
this Gugguggugug, know that sound?

FAK  
Yep. Classic sound. How long have  
you worked here?

MARCUS  
About a year.

FAK  
So you knew Michael?

MARCUS  
Yeah. You knew him well right?

FAK  
Really well before...

MARCUS  
Before what?

FAK  
He started selling drugs.

The door WILDLY swings open.

RICHIE  
CORNER MOTHERFUCKERS--  
(storms in)  
We close on the bread?

MARCUS  
New batch coming out in a minute.



Richie pulls the EMPTY RACKS toward the cooling station...

RICHIE  
BEHIND! Get outta my way, Fak.

CORNER. RICHIE (CONT'D) CORNER. CARMY (O.S.)

Richie wheels the racks out. Carm FLIES IN--

CORNER CARMY (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Chi-Chi, come get your kicks.

FAK  
Carm, I think I can fix the mixer.

Sydney flies through the door--

CORNER SYDNEY  
Chef, any stale bread?

MARCUS  
Above the oven.

CORNER SYDNEY  
Thank you, Chef.  
(exits)  
CORNER.

CORNER. RICHIE (O.S.) CORNER. CARMY  
Fak, I can't pay you.

Richie returns with empty racks, loads more bread--

FAK  
Pay me in sandwich.

CARMY  
Deal.

RICHIE  
(exits)  
No shit, "deal". CORNER.

MARCUS  
Richie always an asshole?

FAK  
Yes.

INT. THE BEEF/DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Sydney and Ebrahiem set up the family meal station. Slices of meatloaf, potato and salad next to plates and silverware.

SYDNEY  
Family's up, crew.

The crew enters, all grab plates. It looks beautiful.

MARCUS  
Damn, Sydney!

RICHIE  
Fuck. Yes. \*

SYDNEY  
Meatloaf with potato gratin and a  
bread salad.

They all sit at a dinning table, eat together. Carmy stares out the window.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Chef, want me to make you a plate?

CARMY  
I'm good, Chef, thanks. Nice work.

RICHIE  
(wolfs it down)  
What the ass kinda ketchup is this?

SYDNEY  
Strawbery and fennel.

RICHIE  
(despite himself)  
Insane. Just bonkers good.

Carmy see the line has formed into an unruly mob...

CARMY  
Fuck...

COSTUMED NERDS shove each other, devolves into a fight, CROWD noise grows louder and louder--

CARMY (CONT'D)  
Cousin, we gotta go outside--

RICHIE  
For what?

CARMY  
This shit is outta control--

RICHIE  
This is your plan. You know  
everything.

                  CARMY  
I need your help--

                  RICHIE  
I'm just a fuckin' loser.  
                  (then)  
How 'bout this gratin, Tito?

Carmy looks at Richie, eyes plead, fully in over his head.

EXT. THE BEEF - MOMENTS LATER

Carm walks out, alone, moves into the crowd--

                  CARMY  
Guys, guys, KNOCK THAT SHIT OFF OR  
I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU IN--

GUYS IN BIZARRE BALLBREAKER COSTUMES CIRCLE AROUND HIM, CARM  
tries to break up a fight between A ROBOT and AN EVIL CARROT--

                  CARMY (CONT'D)  
WHOA, WHOA, WHOA--

                  EVIL CARROT  
GET OFF ME, DR. SCIENCE!!

                  ROBOT  
FUCK YOU, CARROT!

CARMY caught in the crossfire, GETS BELTED BY THE ROBOT,  
TRIPS TO THE GROUND, KNOCKING TWO FIGHTERS INTO EACH OTHER AS  
A BRAWL BREAKS OUT ABOVE HIM, GROWING EVEN MORE OUT OF  
CONTROL UNTIL--

A GUN GOES OFF, LOUD, ECHOES.

EVERYONE STOPS, CARMY TERRIFIED. SUDDENLY, SILENCE. REVEAL,  
Richie, in his apron, GLOCK in one hand, BULLHORN in the  
other. The crowd rises, stares at Richie.

                  RICHIE  
                  (though bullhorn)  
Merry Christmas, Lizards. Sounds  
like we have a real problem out  
here... Any-a-you Incel-4Chan-QAnon-  
Synder-Cut motherfuckers wanna get  
outta line now? Didn't think so.  
Cousin.

Nods to his side, Carmy gets up and moves to Richie's side.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

We're gonna have a tournament here today. And we're gonna be on our best behavior. And we're not gonna scare the regulars or touch 'em or look at 'em weird or do any kinda spectral shit. You're gonna purchase one Italian Beef combo to enter. It's a single elimination tourney, so you lose, you get the fuck out. You win, you get free Italian Ice for a year. Also, I hate litter. So you cocks are gonna pick up after yourselves and god damn recycle.

INT. THE BEEF - MOMENTS LATER

Door chimes. Carm and Richie run in. Carm exhales, smiles, grabs Richie.

CARMY

Dude, how dope is that??

RICHIE

(bats hand away)

Not dope at all.

CARMY

Fuck are you talking about? I brought that crowd in, that's a shitload of money out there!

RICHIE

That we're not prepped for. You're in here screaming at people like a god damn hotshot and *that's* what the shit happens. I shoulda let those turkeys eat you. Today was not the time to introduce a new psychology.

CARMY

It's not a psychology, it's a philosophy.

RICHIE

Both. I don't care what you do in Napa with your fuckin' tweezers or your "FOY GRASS", you got no clue what you're doing here.

(MORE)

RICHIE (CONT'D)

We're gonna stick with what works  
and we're gonna do whatever the  
hell we gotta do to make sure we  
got enough food for these fuckin'  
dorks. So get your ass back there  
and make the god damn spaghetti.

Richie grabs a can of tomatoes from above the door, shoves it  
into Carm's chest--

RICHIE (CONT'D)

And Cousin... you ever throw gravy  
at me like that again, i'm gonna  
put you through the fuckin' wall.

Richie takes off to the kitchen.

RICHIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Sydney, sorry about the gun, babe,  
had to get real.

SYDNEY (O.S.)

All good. I'm from Bridgeport.

Carm stares into the tomatoes.

INT. THE BEEF/KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Carmy SMEARS garlic with the back of his knife, forms a  
paste. Marcus enters with a FRESH ROLL...

MARCUS

Yo, Carm. Check it.

Marcus throws the roll to Carm, Carm opens it -- gorgeous, a  
beautiful, airy crumb.

CARMY

Perfect. Can you tell the  
difference?

MARCUS

Yeah. Big time. Steam tray. You  
were right.

CARMY

I'm right sometimes.

MARCUS

You can throw down, huh?

CARMY

Does it matter? Grab me a fresh  
parm brick and more basil?

MARCUS

(exits)

Yes, Chef.

Beat. Carmy takes that in. Respect.

Then, looks to THE CLOCK...

Tick, tick, tick...

Then at the tomatoes...

Tick, tick, tick...

After a moment, he throws the tomatoes in the garbage.