Incident at The Corner Bar

by

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EXT. WEST ALLIS, WISCONSIN - GARTH STREET - NIGHT

Crowded with parked cars, narrow plots with large houses and fences. THE CORNER BAR sits at the end of the street.

FOUR TEENAGE BOYS stand in the middle of the street.

STEWART, 15, imposing, grins.

STEWART

Want to have some fun?

He peers through his long hair at RICK, 14, stocky, and MIKE, 14, dark good looks.

Mike does his best tough guy.

MIKE

Yeah.

RICK What you got, joker man?

JEFF, 15, overweight, looks concerned.

STEWART

See that bar down there?

Jeff nods. Sweat shines on his forehead.

STEWART

There's a wedding party there tonight and we're gonna crash it.

Stewart, Mike and Rick walk ahead. Jeff lags behind, reluctance on his face. Stewart rubs his hands.

STEWART

The joker man is alive and well.

They arrive outside the bar. Jeff still lags.

EXT. THE CORNER BAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The building looks like it had once been someone's home. Paint peels from the window sills and the walls.

A "Just Married" sign hangs in the front window next to the neon beer sign.

Stewart sneaks up to the side door. He looks at his crew, smiles, pulls the door open, and yells.

STEWART

Free pussy!

He waits a few moments. Mike and Rick motion for him to run.

MIKE Run you idiot!

RICK

Damn it, run!

STEWART

Make sure the fish is on the hook ...

TUCKER, 30s, robust fit in a tuxedo, bursts through the door with several OTHERS.

Stewart waits a moment longer. Tucker gets close.

STEWART ...then run like hell.

TUCKER

You punks are dead!

EXT. GARTH STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Stewart sprints past Mike and Rick.

STEWART

Run fast, blame Jeff.

He passes Jeff, yells.

STEWART Jeff, run, they're after us!

Jeff spots Tucker and reverses direction. He runs like he walks. Slow and bouncy.

STEWART

Move it, fat boy!

Tucker keeps coming.

MIKE (sarcastic to Stewart) Great idea.

RICK Bad as hell!

STEWART Cut through the yards.

EXT. BACK YARDS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The three boys push through shrubs, jump fences, run through gardens. Rick sprints ahead followed by Stewart and Mike.

Rick runs full tilt into a clothes line.

The line pulls tight on his neck. His feet swing up, his body hangs there for a split second, flops down on his back.

He struggles to get his wind back. Stewart jumps over him, speeds on. Mike catches up, stops.

MIKE

Stewart!

Stewart stops, bends over, hands on knees, chest heaving.

STEWART

Leave him.

MIKE

No!

Mike breathes hard. Winded. His face shows conviction.

MIKE

Screw you.

He helps up the downed Rick. The sounds of drunken bar patrons and barking neighborhood dogs grow louder. Stewart runs.

MIKE

Come on. Easy does it.

He props up Rick. Stewart returns with a sheepish grin.

MIKE Sometimes you are such a pussy.

RICK

(raspy) Yuh, a wheel puthy.

Mike locks eyes with Stewart.

MIKE We need to get him to the hospital.

STEWART

No, we don't, he's tough. He just got the wind knocked out of him.

RICK (barely audible) Hospital.

MIKE

We need to go check on Jeff. He's too slow to get away from the drunks.

Stewart grabs Mike. Rick sways, falls to the ground.

STEWART

I said no! No hospital. No checking on Jeff. You got that? Jeff's a big boy.

Mike knocks Stewart's arms away. Rick lies on the ground, tugs on Mike's pant leg.

RICK

(rasps) Hospital!

MIKE

Stewart?

Stewart stares at Mike, makes no move.

MIKE

Going back for Jeff. Come on, Rick.

EXT. GARTH STREET - NIGHT - SAME

Jeff slows down, stops in the middle of the street. Tucker strolls up, gets in his face. Jeff smells alcohol.

TUCKER

(slurs)

Hey, fat boy. Did you ever... Did you ever see a beautiful bride crying?

Push. Jeff scuttles back.

JEFF It wasn't me!

TUCKER Did you ever... see her mama crying?

Push. Jeff slides in the loose gravel.

JEFF

I'm sorry but it wasn't me!

Tucker looks at Jeff, back at the bar.

TUCKER

Okay, fat boy. Come and apologize to the bride. Then you can buy us a beer.

Jeff looks at the man, sighs. Tucker herds him toward the bar.

INT. THE CORNER BAR - NIGHT

Red vinyl covers the bar cushions, stools, and chairs. Cheap wedding decorations hang from the ceiling, rest on the tables.

Tucker pushes Jeff through the door. Everyone glares.

RAY, 30s, the groom, chunky, tuxedo in disarray, crashes through the chairs and guests. He grabs Jeff, raises his fist.

Tucker holds Ray back.

TUCKER

Ray, he's come here to apologize!

Ray considers for a moment, puts his hand over his mouth, and steers for the rest room.

NADINE, 30s, the bride, plain white dress, sits at a table. She dabs her puffy eyes with a napkin. She frowns as Ray enters the rest room.

She's as wide as Jeff. Looks kind of like him. He mans up.

JEFF

I'm sorry for ruining your reception.

She stands and slaps Jeff.

NADINE (loudly) Feel better? I damn well know I do.

The bar patrons cheer. Jeff holds his face, blinks his eyes.

NADINE (softly) That was for the male testosterone levels in here. Add beer and pretty soon it's a duel to the death.

JEFF You sound like my mom. Sure, mention your mom, hoping I'll slap you again. Pretty bold, kid. What's your name?

JEFF

Jeff.

NADINE

Nadine. Stay, have some cake. And if anyone gives you crap, tell them I said it was okay.

EXT. THE CORNER BAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Mike and Rick creep up to the side door. Mike pats Rick on the back. Looks in the window.

MIKE

I didn't see him. You wait out here.

Rick waves him off. His neck looks terrible. One long bruise.

RICK

No problem.

Mike peeks in the door.

INT. THE CORNER BAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Tucker hauls him in the door. Holds him against the wall. Pulls his arm back, punches the wall next to Mike's face.

TUCKER

Scared your little punk ass, huh?!

MIKE

Can someone drive my friend --

Stewart and Rick burst in the door. Uses Rick as a shield.

STEWART

-- to the emergency room.

No one moves.

STEWART

Now!

Jeff, Mike and Stewart line up with Rick.

Tucker watches in fascination.

TUCKER

Ain't that some shit?! You tough guys need our help? Our help!

STEWART We can play whip me later. Can you please help my friend? (sighs) I apologize for yelling and insulting you before.

TUCKER Jeff, should we accept his apology?

JEFF He should apologize to Nadine first.

Nadine looks at Jeff. Stewart watches Jeff and Nadine.

NADINE

You sure, Jeff?

Jeff nods.

Nadine walks up to Stewart, slaps him.

NADINE

What would your grandma say about your filthy mouth?

Stewart's eyes water, his cheek shows a clear hand print. Nadine turns away satisfied.

Tucker and his cronies clap and whistle.

Jeff grins, a hand over his mouth. Looks around the bar.

JEFF

Nadine. Where's your mom?

NADINE She went home after the ceremony.

Jeff looks at Tucker.

JEFF

Her mom wasn't even here?!

Tucker grins. Shrugs.

EXT. THE CORNER BAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A police cruiser pulls up with lights flashing. Police officer GROGAN, 40s, fit, clean cut, exits the cruiser.

Adjusts his hat and belt. Heads for the main door. His boots crunch on the gravel.

INT. THE CORNER BAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Stewart looks around. No one is watching him. He punches Jeff in the back. Jeff gasps.

STEWART That's for all the shit, shit bird.

Jeff moves to retaliate, notes Rick rubbing his neck, stops.

TUCKER

Cop's here, time to disappear.

He ducks out the side door.

Grogan enters. Scans the bar.

GROGAN What we got here? (blurts out) My friend needs help. He was clothes lined by a clothes line!

The officer examines Rick's neck. Deep purple bruise.

GROGAN

He's okay. Can't say I've seen worse. Won't hurt to get him to the hospital.

NADINE

That's why we called you. The tall one came in here upset about his hurt friend. And we thought he had insulted us which led to some harsh words.

Grogan frowns. Notes the hand print on Stewart's cheek.

NADINE

We have an understanding and all is right that was wrong.

He looks at the boys. Tucker moves to a bar stool.

GROGAN

Got a call about some boys disturbing the peace --

NADINE

No charges, officer.

He looks at her. She points to her white dress. Grogan nods.

GROGAN Congrats on getting married. You have a good night. Come on boys, let's go.

JEFF

Thank you, Nadine.

She scoffs, dismisses them with a wave. Grogan holds the door.

EXT. THE CORNER BAR - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Waiting for Grogan. Jeff hassles Stewart.

JEFF You see that bar there? Let's go there for no good reason --

STEWART

Alright. I know where this is --

JEFF

And piss people off we don't know.

MIKE Piss off your friends.

RICK And leave them for dead.

JEFF And get them in trouble. And be a jerk about it.

STEWART

I guess I'm an asshole...

He looks from side to side. Sly.

STEWART

Bullshit! You should have seen your faces when I yelled. You loved it. And Rick's clothes line limbo, that was hilarious...

Jeff, Mike and Rick walk to the cruiser. Stewart lags behind.

FADE OUT.