

RATS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN CITY STREET - DAY

It's a quiet side street with little traffic. Two POLICEMEN, GROOM (27), a beefy African-American, and FRATELLI (33), tall and lanky, stare down an open manhole cover in the sidewalk. Groom looks baffled.

GROOM

We're gonna do what now?

FRATELLI

We're going down there.

GROOM

Yeah, that ain't happening. Sewers are full of shit. Giant shit eating rats. Probably zombie flesh-eating rat fuckers.

FRATELLI

It also has an escaped convict running loose and we're going to go down there and flush him out.

GROOM

I say let the rats eat him. Or wait for him to get sick of being in that shitter, and when he pops back up, we clock him, hose his ass down and send him back to the can.

Fratelli has had enough.

FRATELLI

Just think of it as a day at the beach, Groom. Now get going!

Groom grumbles as he steps gingerly into the hole.

GROOM

(as he climbs down)

Don't know what beaches you go to, but mine don't smell like rotting carcasses left in a moldy outhouse.

FRATELLI

Oh, your shoulder mike may not work underground, so if we get separated and you run into trouble, blow your whistle so I can find you.

Groom grumbles as he disappears into the void.

INT. MANHATTAN SEWER SYSTEM - DAY

Despite it being daytime, it's dark as hell down here. Groom sweeps his flashlight around, but all he can see is a murky brown water.

GROOM

Sergeant! How deep is this shit?

FRATELLI (O.S.)

Ankle-high at best. Nothing to worry about!

Groom reaches the bottom of the latter and steps off into the muck. Only it's not ankle-deep. He drops into the filth and sinks in to his thigh.

GROOM

What the fuckin' fuck!

FRATELLI

But no need to get in that crap -- there are walkways along the side.

GROOM

(under his breath)

I swear before this day is over I'm gonna kill me an escaped convict or a sergeant. Or maybe both.

Groom climbs onto the walkway, sweeps his flashlight around the noxious sewer tunnel as Fratelli lands next to him.

They move slowly down the sewer tunnel, clinging close to the walls as they walk.

The flashlights highlight the occasional rat crawling along the walkway, but they scatter as the two policemen approach.

GROOM (CONT'D)

Rats! I hate goddamn rats!

Shortly they come upon an intersection where another sewer line feeds into the existing one.

FRATELLI

I'll take the tunnel to the left.
You go straight.

GROOM

That means I have to get into the
shit again. Why don't you go
straight instead?

FRATELLI

You've already been in it. No need
for both of us to get filthy.

Fratelli takes off, leaving Groom to forge ahead. He sucks it
up, prepared to step into the thigh-deep water, but--

This time it's only up to his ankles. Groom sighs, and walks
quickly across to the other side. As he gets out, he feels
something funny, and looks down.

A GIANT RAT is clinging to his pants leg. Groom SCREAMS,
shaking his leg until the vermin jumps off and scurries away.
He takes out his whistle and starts BLOWING.

Fratelli hustles back.

FRATELLI (CONT'D)

Did you see him?

GROOM

There was a fucking rat on my leg!
It was as big as a german shepherd!

FRATELLI

Jesus Christ. I'm gonna fucking
stick a rat up your ass, I swear to
God. Now get going!

Fratelli heads away. Groom mumbles and continues on. He pulls
out his night stick to ward off more rat attacks.

He continues slowly along, alternating a search of the sewer
with a lookout for more rats.

Groom reaches a dead end where the muck pours through a large
grate. A large sucking sound as the water rushes out.

He turns to head back, and just as he does, a cascade of
VOMIT streams out of a wall recess, barely missing Groom.

He shines a light in the recess and comes face to face with
LOUIS DANKS, 25, pale and wretched.

Danks tries to rush away, but Groom nails him HARD in the
back with his nightstick. Danks trips and falls head first
into the muck. Groom jumps in after him, blowing his whistle.

He pulls his sidearm as Danks starts to rise, but Danks ducks down and charges at Groom, knocking him backwards into the filth, his gun dropping under the water.

Groom gets up and punches Danks HARD, dropping him to his knees, dazed. He quickly searches the water, and comes up with -- ANOTHER GIANT RAT.

GROOM
GAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHFFFFFF!!

He quickly shoves the rat down Danks shirt, who is trying to flee. Danks screams and tries desperately to not only run away, but rid himself of the vermin.

Danks has no luck, as he quickly runs into Fratelli, weapon drawn, responding to Groom's whistle.

FRATELLI
Hands over your head, asshole!

Danks does as he told. The rat shimmies down his leg. Groom comes up and roughly places cuffs on the convict.

GROOM
You know, I ought to blow your goddamn brains out, but a black cop shooting a white prisoner is apparently frowned upon in this state. Maybe the sergeant can do it for me.

FRATELLI
Nah, the paperwork is a pain in the ass. But you know what this piece of shit deserves?

EXT. PRISON FARM - DAY

Danks walks with a shovel in a large pig pen. Sweat rolls off his forehead under an intense sun. Pigs wallow around him.

A stocky guard, HOOVER, 40, sits on a horse with a shotgun, keeping a watchful eye on the convicts working the farm.

HOOVER
That pig shit ain't gonna pick itself up. Get a move on.

Danks curses and holds his breath as he picks up a big pile of pig crap and dumps it in a wagon full of manure.

FADE OUT.