

A NOIR NUIT: REDUX

Written by

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EXT. CHICAGO SKYLINE

We open on various shots of the Chicago skyline. It is night and the city is engulfed in a rainstorm.

NEIL (V.O.)
It was a dark and stormy Chicago
night.

The buildings are temporarily illuminated with flashes of lightning.

NEIL (V.O.)
Even with the rain, my desk fan was
no match for that August Chicago
heat.

INT. NEIL'S OFFICE

We open on Detective NEIL O'Callaghan. He is in his office waiting for a new case. He is sitting at his desk, with his feet up on the desk, reading a "Detective Monthly" magazine.

NEIL (V.O.)
Even with my tie and jacket off, I
was sweatin' more than a whore in
church. I would have just gone
home, but my place on State Street
was more of a flophouse than my
office.

Neil puts down his magazine. He leans into his desk and opens a drawer. We can see the drawer is filled with at least a dozen bourbon bottles. He pulls one bottle out of the desk. He pours himself a large, neat glass and leaves the bottle on his desk. He takes a drink.

NEIL (V.O.)
Times were tough for a private
detective. But they were about to
get a whole lot tougher.

CARLY enters. She is wearing a tight-fitting red dress and high heeled shoes.

NEIL
Well, hello Red.

CARLY
Hello yourself, O'Callaghan.

NEIL

I didn't think that I would see you back in my life. What brings you around here?

Neil takes a sip of his bourbon.

CARLY

I've got a problem. And you're the only one I came to because ... because you're the best.

NEIL

You're not the first woman to tell me that, Red.

CARLY

For the job, Detective O'Callaghan. My sister has gone missing and I need you to find out where she is.

NEIL

As I recall, a missing person is official police business. Not something you need a private detective for.

CARLY

It is, but I need someone who can handle a case with a little discretion. And I know that know more than a little bit about discretion.

NEIL (V.O.)

Red knew what she was talking about. We had been lovers and friends since the Speak Easy days.

NEIL

What's in it for me, Red? You gonna help me pay the rent?

CARLY

I thought you would do it for an old friend. If you brought her back to me, it would give us a reason to celebrate.

NEIL (V.O.)

Christ. Dames. They always know exactly what you're looking for.

NEIL
I'll take the case, Red. Any leads?

CARLY
Two words: mud-slides.

NEIL
That's one word.

CARLY
No, it's two. Mud. Slides.

NEIL
I am pretty sure it's just one word.

CARLY
You think it's hyphenated?

NEIL
No, it's a delicious mix of vodka, coffee liqueur, Irish cream...

CARLY
(sobbing)
I know, I know. Please Detective O'Callaghan, find her.

NEIL (V.O.)
If there is one thing I know, it's that even the classiest of dames will turn into a tramp at the mercy of a Mudslide. But I can't stand seein' dames cry, neither, so I had to find Red's sister.

NEIL
I ain't promising nothing, Red. But I'll do my best.

CARLY
Thank you. Here is a picture of her and here is her necklace. And detective? You were always good to me.

NEIL
Probably too good, Red. You never seemed to like the boys that treated you right.

CARLY
I liked you, Detective.

NEIL
 (dismissive)
 I have a job to do, Red.

EXT. CHICAGO SKYLINE

We see more shots of the Chicago skyline.

NEIL (V.O.)
 It was pretty clear that if I had
 any shot with Red, it was going to
 come down to finding her sister.

We see shots of the el tracks.

NEIL (V.O.)
 If there was one man who could get
 me the lead on a disappeared dame,
 it was Newsie Eric.

We see Detective O'Callaghan drinking from his hip flask as
 he crosses the street.

EXT. UNDER THE EL TRACKS

NEIL
 Newsie? You there?

Eric steps out from the shadows.

ERIC
 What's the deal, Detective
 O'Callaghan? I am on a hot beat.

NEIL
 I can see that. You have your
 purse.

ERIC
 It's a man-bag.

NEIL
 Whatever.

ERIC
 I have better things to do that
 help out dead beat detectives.

NEIL
 It's a lost dame.

ERIC
What do I care? Dames get lost in
this city all the time.

NEIL
A reporter like you still has to
have a heart.

ERIC
This city changes people,
Detective.

NEIL
Like making them think that its
okay for a man to carry a purse.

ERIC
I can put everything I need in it.
My credentials. A notebook.
Pencils!

NEIL
I need to find a dame.

ERIC
Then you tell me that you like my
bag.

NEIL
(sighing)
Your purse looks great.

ERIC
Nice try detective. I have to be
going.

Eric heads back out into the shadows.

NEIL
Wait! Your man-bag ...

ERIC
Yes?

NEIL
It's very fashion forward.

ERIC
And?

NEIL
It really accentuates your eyes.

ERIC
 You think so? I thought maybe the
 taupe would contrast my skin too
 much, but then, when I saw the
 camel color-

NEIL
 Do *mudslides* mean anything to you?

ERIC
 There's one place that comes to
 mind. Tall John's!

NEIL
 Tall John's? That's the last gin
 joint a dame should be hangin'
 around in!

ERIC
 I know! But they are known for two
 things: their Buffalo Wings and
 (breaking)
the Mudslides.

INT. TALL JOHN'S BAR

NEIL (V.O.)
 I knew I would have to act fast.
 In a town like Chicago, a girl on
 the slides can disappear faster
 than a dollar bill in a strip club.

Neil enters Tall John's Bar. It is a seedy bar but it is
 doing a strong business. The clientele, gangsters and
 flappers, sip their drinks warily. The mood is somber.

Neil walks up to Tall JOHN, who is behind the bar. John is
 wearing a bartender costume with pants, a collared shirt, a
 vest, and a tie.

JOHN
 (suspiciously)
 Welcome to Tall John's Bar,
 stranger. What will it be?

NEIL
 I'll have a mudslide.

JOHN
 Oh.
 (a beat)
 How about I get you a whisky?

NEIL
I'll have a mudslide.

JOHN
Hmmm. We have really good wings.
You know what goes good with wings?
A beer.

NEIL
I'll have a mudslide.

JOHN
Are you sure? I have a really good
bottle selection.

NEIL
I'll have a mudslide.

JOHN
(whispering)
It's kind of a girly drink.

NEIL
I'll have a mudslide.

JOHN
Yeah, the vodka is all the way over
there and then I have to go back to
the ice box to get the cream. And
then? Then I have to shake it up.
The local beer is really good.

NEIL
I'll have a mudslide.

JOHN
It's really a lot of work for me to
make you one and I was just
thinking that you won't even notice-

NEIL
(interrupting)
It wasn't too much work to serve
'em up to this dame!

Neil flashes the picture of Red's sister.

JOHN
I don't know nothing about that!

NEIL
Her name is Laura.

JOHN
I've never seen her.

NEIL
Yeah, well, she was last seen in here.

JOHN
Nope. Never seen her.

NEIL
Look here, Tall John. This dame is missin'. I ain't got no beef with you or this lousy bar, but her sister hired me to find her. And if I don't get some answers soon, I am going to have to crack some skulls.

JOHN
Take it easy. It's just that girl would always order mudslides and they are so hard to make because we use real cream here and I have to go all the way back into the ice box, come back to the bar, then measure out two ounces-

NEIL
-the girl!

JOHN
Right! I have some information for you.
(in a hushed voice)
That Laura is Fat Andy's girl now.

John gestures to the right.

JOHN (CONT'D)
He is in the back room with her as we speak.

NEIL
Well, that wasn't so hard was it?

Neil leaves John to enter the back room.

JOHN
So, I don't have to make that mudslide, right?

INT. FAT ANDY'S BACK ROOM

Fat Andy's Back Room is an underground casino. There are tables for Blackjack, Roulette, and Craps. It is empty except for two people.

Fat ANDY is sitting on a couch fanning himself. LAURA is also in the room cuddling up to Fat Andy. She is sipping on what looks to be a tall milk shake through a straw.

NEIL

Fat Andy?

ANDY

Who wants to know?

LAURA

Yeah, who wants to know?

NEIL

I am detective O'Callaghan. Don't bother getting up.

ANDY

I couldn't if I wanted to. My diabetes has really inflamed my feet and it makes it hard to walk.

LAURA

He is so fat I have to help wash him with a stick and a rag!

NEIL

I am here for the girl.

ANDY

She's with me now.

LAURA

Yeah, I am with tubby.

NEIL

Her sister wants her back.

ANDY

Well, I wish I could help you, Detective, but I was lucky enough to snag her once and I am not giving her up.

LAURA

And he makes these chocolate shakes that make me feel like the bees knees. So I aint' leavin'!

NEIL
Look, Fat Andy, you are a gambling
man.

Neil saunters over to the Craps table. He picks up a pair of
dice.

NEIL (CONT'D)
If I can roll a seven, the girl
comes with me. Anything else, I
walk out of here with nothing.

ANDY
Ha! There are only six ways to roll
that Detective. You have a one to
one chance of that coming up.

LAURA
I have a one to once chance that my
pee smells like chocolate milk
shakes!

NEIL
(To Laura)
Kid ... what the hell is wrong with
you?

ANDY
You have a deal, detective.

Neil sets the dice, concentrates, and throws.

ANDY (CONT'D)
What was it, Detective?

NEIL
It was a--
(obviously lying)
-- a seven.

ANDY
Are you sure? I better get up to
check.

NEIL
Don't bother. It was definitely a
seven.

Andy struggles to get up. He is unsuccessful.

ANDY
Sweetie, go see what he rolled.

LAURA
 (confessing)
 Baby, I can't count.

NEIL
 It was seven.

ANDY
 No!

NEIL
 The girl is coming with me.

LAURA
 I ain't goin' nowhere with you.
 Andy an' I are in love and he needs
 me to wipe the chicken grease from
 under his second chin when he gets
 to eatin' all aggressive. He can't
 reach nowheres past his elbows.
 Isn't that right, baby?

NEIL
 It's time for you to get off the
 hooch, sister. Besides, I have
 something for you.

Neil produces the necklace.

LAURA
 My necklace!

NEIL
 Your sister had me bring it. She
 cares about you kidd-o. She wants
 you to come home.

LAURA
 I thought no one cared about me.

NEIL
 Your sister cares ... cares enough
 to hire me to find you.

LAURA
 Alright, I'll leave with you.
 (to Andy)
 I'll miss you Fat Andy. We'll
 always have *Biscuit Tuesdays*.

ANDY
 We'll always have *Biscuit Tuesdays*.

NEIL

That's a good girl.

ANDY

You may have won this round,
Detective, but Chicago is a
dangerous town. You better watch
yourself.

NEIL

You better watch your hyper
tension. C'mon toots, let's go.

Neil offers Laura his arm. They exit.

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

Sure, I knew better than to take on
a gangster like Fat Andy. But a
job was a job. And this was a job
with a happy ending ... at least
for a little while.