

Ghosts After Breakfast

a supernatural farce by Gerald Saul

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first draft; December/1994
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FADE IN

EXT DAY - PORKY'S CAB

Porky, a flabby slob in his late twenties, is driving his cab around the small city of Moose Jaw, where 2/3 of the buildings were built between 1920 and 1935. He pulls over and picks up an old woman with some heavy bags. She opens her own door and while struggling with her own bags, Porky turns on his meter and taps his finger on his wheel impatiently. They begin driving.

The woman talks about her rough day while Porky hums to himself. He lets her off in front of an apartment building. She struggles to lift her groceries out of the cab. Some things drop out. She picks them up, unassisted. She misses one can of peas. Porky drives away.

EXT DAY - PORKY'S CAB ON DOWNTOWN STREET

Outside a fancy restaurant, Porky is sitting in his cab, eating cold peas out of the can and mumbling to himself.

PORKY

So who the fuck cares what your name is big shot, what do I look like, a travel agent. I'll tell you what you can do with that cel phone Mister Hokey Smokes; You can fuckin' go jump in the god damn lake, and take your chintzy tip with you. Fuck you.

Porky looks at a few coins, assumably his tip, on the dash. Fifty feet away, a pair of men in suits wave for a cab. Porky drops the half can of peas onto the passenger side floor beside numerous other food receptacles, puts his car in gear and accelerates towards the new fares; MR. APPLEHEAD, a well dressed man in his seventies and MR. CARROTTOP, an aggressive businessman of 45.

MR. CARROTTOP

(to Porky)

Forty first and Main.

(to Mr. Applehead)

I'm telling you, there's something there and it's not small change.

MR. APPLEHEAD

Yes, yes, yes. I've heard all the reports, but what do you want from me? I haven't been on speaking terms with Shardelini in twenty years.

MR. CARROTTOP

All I need is a little info on his security. I

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already know he won't let us salvage in the old
EXT DAY - PORKY'S CAB ON DOWNTOWN STREET - CONTINUED

MR. CARROTTOP

warehouses, so I figured why bother asking,
eh?

MR. APPLEHEAD

From what I've heard, you have your people in
there already.

MR. CARROTTOP

Just a plumbing assistant checking the pipes,
all legit.

MR. APPLEHEAD

Every night in the same half demolished
Falcon Warehouse?

MR. CARROTTOP

Anyway, when it comes to that kind of score...
Hey! That was our stop!

Porky grumbles resentfully as he spins the car quickly around to pull up to the destination, stopping conveniently beside a large mud puddle. Exit Mr. Applehead and Mr. Carrottop.

EXT DAY; LATER - IN FRONT OF SEEDY APARTMENT BLOCK

Porky is dropping off CHUCK, a man who obviously lives in this type of building.

CHUCK

Hey, lemme level wit ya. I'm a liddle short
tanight. But I'm tellin ya, if ya put this on Lucky
Dan in disaftanoons race, it'll make ya up big.

Porky grabs the soiled bills offered him.

PORKY

Yeah, yeah. Get a fucking life.

Chuck exits car.

PORKY

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(to himself)

Fuckin low life scum. Want something for nothing. I'll kick your ass down the street, take my fare any way I can. Teach yeah to con me. Fuckhead.

EXT DAY - IN FRONT OF SEEDY APARTMENT BLOCK - CONTINUED

Porky spots LOUIS, a trench-coat-clad man standing conspicuously on the street corner. Porky pulls his cab over and yells out his window.

PORKY

Louis! Hey, I want to place a bet!

LOUIS hurries over to Porky's car.

LOUIS

Quit that yelling man, trying to give me away, I don't need that kind of shit.

Porky pulls out all of his cash and thrusts it into Louis's hand.

PORKY

All of it on Lucky Dan.

LOUIS

What's this. You still owe the boss some big money and he's looking for you.

PORKY

Just place the fucking bet. I know what I'm doing.

LOUIS

When he catches up to you, it'll be your car, and maybe your fingers.

Porky drives away.

EXT DAY - MAIN STREET

Porky swerves back and forth between the two lanes, periodically cursing the other drivers. A street sign they pass reads Porky will fall like rain in a bucket.

PORKY (to self)

Fucking know it all. Take away all your money

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and see who fucking respects you. Fuck. Pound you, you stupid fucking fuck. Horse will come in and we'll see who's laughing. I'll teach you to be so arrogant, I'll shove a wad of bills down your throat thick enough to choke a horse. They'll call you horse face. Fucking funny.

EXT DAY - MAIN STREET - CONTINUED

FRANK, a passenger whom we did not see until now, is sitting in the back. He looks like a 1930's gangster with double breasted suit and wide hat. He is a ghost and is shot in black and white.

FRANK

That's getting it, but maybe a couple more 'fuck's, like before horse; "choke a fuckin horse".

PORKY

I'll fucking say it any fucking way I want to fucking say it.

FRANK

(laughs)

Now your getting it. I almost believed you there.

Frank pulls a plastic name tag out of his pocket and crams it under the seat.

EXT DAY - PARKING LOT

Porky is searching his car for loose change.

PORKY (to self)

God damn fucking horse. Fifth fucking place. Conned me into making that sucker bet. Fuck. Just so the boss can take my fucking car. Only in his dreams, the stupid fuck.

Porky finds some gum and a couple of nickels. Then he finds the plastic name tag which says CARROTTOP PLUMBING - DAVE BARBER, ASSISTANT. He tosses it into the glove compartment with the huge array of other stuff. Then he pauses, remembering for a moment, and he smiles.

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EXT EVENING - OLD WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

PORKY is driving his cab. The sun has turned the sky red as it descends. Three lines of Spray paint on a wall read Satan/ Porky/Blue Jays. He pulls his cab into a deserted area of town where an old brick warehouse is being torn down. The inscription above the door reads: Falcon. He stops his cab by the side of the building, clips the plumbing badge onto his shirt and gets out. Many of the walls of the warehouse have fallen down. The few walls that remain constitute a corridor with a few rooms leading off it.

INT EVENING - COLLAPSING WAREHOUSE

A steel door is lodged half open into a room where MALER, a thirty five year old work-a-holic is excavating materials from beneath the floor. Some of the wooden floorboards have been lifted out so that she can crouch down there. Parts of the ceiling have collapsed in. Maler has a single light, a metal lamp with a bendable neck. She is removing small items and laying them down in an orderly fashion on a cloth lined tray. Some of the items are old broken glass bottles but mostly there are bundles of rotting papers, bound together with twine. The she pulls out an old steel box and, with a great deal of effort, also dislodges a gun and places it on the tray.

Porky clamours down the passageway. He stops at each room and looks in. Every movement makes considerable noise; from the buckles on his boots and the unnamed stuff crammed into his pockets. Porky reaches the door to Maler's room. Although he could easily squeeze through the half open door, he doesn't. Stubbornly, he begins to push on it, grunting and groaning. It grinds open about 2 or 3 inches. Breathless, Porky enters.

Porky looks around the room, inspecting every corner. Maler looks at him and notices the ID-photo badge tagged to his jacket. She has one on as well. In the dim light, the details of his badge cannot be seen. Maler pauses to study the metal box. It will not open. With a bit of rubbing, she discovers that there are words etched into the lid. Porky goes to Maler's tray of stuff. He picks up the items one by one and vocalizes inane grunts at each. He starts picking up the whole tray.

PORKY

The boss told me to get these.

MALER

(grabbing onto the tray. With a clatter she stops him)

Like Hell!

Porky puts the tray down

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PORKY

He said I should come down here and I should get this and there shouldn't be any trouble and I should just say...

Maler looks at his tag, now better lit. The picture on it is not Porky. She grabs the tag off him.

MALER

This isn't you.

INT EVENING - COLLAPSING WAREHOUSE - CONTINUED

PORKY

No, I'm doing a guy a favour, so it's okay. You can call the boss.

Maler picks up her cel phone and turns it on. The dial tone seems too loud, or else the ruins seem too quiet.

MALER

So what's your name then?

PORKY

Porky.

MALER

(eyes darting up at him)

Porky?

PORKY

Yeah, what's wrong with that? It's my fucking name.

Maler lays her phone down absentmindedly in front of her, neglecting to hang up the connection. It continues to buzz.

MALER

Do you believe in curses Porky?

PORKY

What do I look like, a mountie?

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Maler brushes off the top of the metal box and turns it towards him,

MALER

Well perhaps you should. This one has your name on it.

Close up, metal lid reads Porky will dance with the mistress of hell. The steel door to their room slams shut. Their lamp is the only light, leaving the warehouse shrouded in darkness. Faint outlines and movements are revealed by the light of the rising full moon. Maler and Porky look at each other. Maler looks a bit scared. Porky looks like he is taking a lot of effort to put his thoughts together. His lower lip sticks out a bit as he grabs onto the door handle and begins pulling without effect.

PORKY

Open that door.

INT EVENING - COLLAPSING WAREHOUSE - CONTINUED

MALER

If you can't open it, I can't open it.

PORKY

You closed it, you open it.

MALER

Look, something weird is going on here. I think we should get out of here.

PORKY

Then open the door.

MALER

If you boost me up, I get through the opening in the ceiling.

PORKY

I'm going through the door. Give me the key.

MALER

I don't have any key. Something really fucked is going on here and if you don't help me...

PORKY

(Picking up metal box)

Why don't you boost me up?

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MALER
(Grabbing box away from him)
Because you weigh a hundred pounds more
than me, moron.

PORKY
Then you should open the door.

Long pause as Porky and Maler stare at each other. The unyielding stubbornness between them is interrupted by rapid gun shots beyond the door. Maler grabs her phone off the floor and begins to dial.

MALER
I'm calling the police!

PORKY
No Police!!!

INT EVENING - COLLAPSING WAREHOUSE - CONTINUED

Porky slaps the cel phone out of her hand, it hits the floor with a crash. It is undoubtedly broken.

PORKY
(unconvincingly)
Sorry.

Maler slaps him across the face.

MALER
You asshole! Help me out of this room. NOW!

PORKY
Let me take the box.

MALER
(angrily thrusts box into his belly)
Fine!

Porky gets on his hands and knees. Without gentleness, Maler steps on top of him and climbs up through the ceiling onto the roof. The light from the floor casts a ghastly shadow of him across the wall. He reaches down and picks up the gun.

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MALER
(voice from above)
Did you call a cab?

PORKY
That's mine. Give me a hand.

EXT WAREHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

Maler reaches down to him. She grabs one of his hands and the box, which he is holding with the other hand. He almost pulls her back down into the room but their mutual determination to hold the box keeps them up. As Porky climbs onto the roof, Maler regains possession of the box. The two of them jump down onto the hood of the car, the new dents are in good company. Porky is trying to grab the box back when black and white ghosts of FOUR 1930'S GANGSTERS with tommy guns emerge from the dark.

GANGSTER #1
We've been looking for you Porky, hand it over.
This is the end of the line. Say your prayers,
cause I've been waiting a long time to play taps
on you. My trigger finger is

EXT WAREHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT - CONTINUED

GANGSTER #1
itchy and I'm going to do some scratching all
across your head. Yeah, you thought you were
so tough, but now it's time to slam that big
door. No more long cold goodbyes, just put on
your p.j.'s and get ready for the big sleep. Hope
you don't mind wet weather cause you're going
get rained on. Take a message to the fishes,
tell them you got croaked.

PORKY
Did you ever see that spaghetti western with
Clint Eastwood? I was just thinking about a
scene I saw there. This ugly guy was in the
bathtub...

GANGSTER #2
Save your breath, cause your going to need
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where you're going... To the morgue. Fogged in good, Chicago lightening style. Prepare to meet...

Porky draws the gun and begins firing. With each shot, for a brief instant the scene becomes DAYLIGHT with the warehouse appearing whole and new. The gangsters all fall.

PORKY

... and then he says, "If you're going to shoot..."
Oh, never mind.

Porky starts the cab and they drive away. The bodies of the dead gangsters are no longer visible.

INT CAB - NIGHT

PORKY

Sometimes I can't get past thinking about the present, like that the past only happened to give us a supply of cool old stuff.

MALER

Do you ever get the feeling that where ever you go, there's someone there waiting for you. Not necessarily for your good or your harm, but just waiting?

INT CAB - NIGHT - CONTINUED

PORKY

Like, "we are not alone"?

MALER

Yeah, but more apathetic, we're not alone but we might as well be.

PORKY

They're watching us.

MALER

Laughing at us.

PORKY

I hear ya.

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The cab drives away from the warehouse into the better lit area of town. Porky pulls over the cab, under a streetlight beside a friendly looking park. Engine off, they sit for a moment in the silence. Suddenly, both at once they grab at the box between them.

PORKY

Give me that, I need it. It's mine.

MALER

Legally, I hold the strongest claim over this, and so if you wish to contest it in court...

PORKY

Shardelini would get it, and you'd be the one to get the shit end of the court stick.

FRANK

(in back seat)

That's telling her. Don't let her fancy dancy talk you out of what's yours. What is she, your new twist?

MALER

Who the hell are you? Where did you come from?

FRANK

Listen Doll. You needn't worry your pretty head none about this here loot. We'll be taking good care of it.

INT CAB - NIGHT - CONTINUED

PORKY

That's just Frank. He was just crouched back there listening. Does that a lot. Rides with me for luck.

MALER

But why is he in black and white.

FRANK

Hey Sugar. Tell you what, we'll take you out for a nice evening, a bit of dancing. Do you need some new shoes?

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PORKY

Is he? Never noticed. I'm a bit colour blind.

Porky runs a red light. Other cars honk but he doesn't notice.

FRANK

Okay dame, if you're so observant, how come you didn't notice your boss man there in the next car?

Mr. Carrotopp is in the back seat of a dark limo. He looks angry. We see a corner of a gun he is loading.

MALER

I guess you'll be keeping that appointment with the mistress of hell.

PORKY

That could have meant anything. Maybe hell just refers to some swank night club.

MALER

Perhaps we should stop at a phone booth.

Mr. Carrotopp begins shooting at them. Chase begins. Porky growls and drives very aggressively. He reaches under his seat and pulls out a thick phone book. Upon doing so, he sinks four inches lower in his seat. He hands phone book to Maler.

PORKY

Here!

INT CAB - NIGHT - CONTINUED

Maler begins flipping through the phone book, reading aloud.

MALER

'Helga, Helix, Helko, Hellard, Hellena'. Damn!
No 'Hell'!

PORKY

Speaking of hell, why the hell is he shooting at us?

MALER

I was supposed to stay at my post and call him

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as soon as I found anything. He must think this is pretty important. I wonder what it is.

Maler pries at the box, eventually getting it open a crack.

Frank

It's the missing police files that would have convicted Shardelini in 1948. Carrotop probably thinks you know what he knows and will use the file to take over the east side.

MALER

How do you know?

FRANK

I'm the one who stole them for Shardelini in the first place.

PORKY

So your being here is just a ruse. You've been in cahoots with Shardelini all along.

FRANK

Nah. Actually I've been off the payroll since my untimely death in '52.

PORKY

Does that mean all that advice you gave me about modern women? ...about getting ahead in the 90's...?

FRANK

All hogwash. Sorry.

INT CAB - NIGHT - CONTINUED

Maler is ducked down from the gunfire and looking through the old shards of paper from the box. Porky is absorbed by the shape of one bullet, which he holds a inch from his eye and then puts into his mouth and bites lightly down on.

MALER

He's right. Personal letters, names, dates, this is lethal stuff.

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PORKY

Shit, I was hoping for some cash. There's only so many times a man can pick the wrong horse, and my time must be coming soon. Fuck. If only once I had a helping hand.

MALER

Then shut your eyes and think of that reward.

Maler grabs the steering wheel and pulls it hard to one side, causing the cab to collide with Carrottop's car, pushing it off the road and into a tree. Carrottop's horn starts blowing, indicating he is unconscious or dead from the crash. Porky pulls his cab over.

EXT STREET - EARLY MORNING

Maler, Porky and Frank, suddenly outside the cab.

MALER

We won.

FRANK

Good job Doll. Of course you know what this means?

PORKY

We must be the good guys after all. I guess it's time for one of us to make some fucking clever speech.

MALER

Like crime doesn't pay more than forty years? Like we've made the world a safer place? Like that the city has a million and one stories and so ours doesn't amount to a hill of trees?

PORKY

Exactly. At least now it feels like it's finally over. You know, we could still take over the east side?

EXT STREET - EARLY MORNING - CONTINUED

MALER

Well if we did, we wouldn't have to be just run of the mill thugs... We could make a difference.

Maler and Porky continue to talk as they walk down road towards rising sun. Frank cranes his neck backward, looking behind them. Unnoticed by the others, their

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cab is demolished against a tree, its windows riddled with bullets. Porky and Maler are dead in the front seat. Dissolve to black and white.

FADE OUT

G.Saul --- Ghosts After Breakfast page: