

Knife to a Gun Fight

by
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1 INT. STORAGE UNIT HALLWAY - NIGHT 1

The roll-up doors of storage units line either side of a long, darkened hallway. At the end of the hall, an exit door.

A beat.

MAN #1, 42 and terrified, TEARS in from an adjoining hallway and turns down the hall. His nose is broken, blood covers his face and shirt. Wrong way.

MAN #1
No! No, no, no, no...

He quickly turns around, toward the exit and POUNDS down the hallway, BANGING off the walls, pushing off, anything to speed him up and get the hell out of there.

He grips the handle and BANGS his way out the exit door.

2 EXT. STORAGE UNIT EXIT - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS 2

Man #1 BURSTS out the door and looks around. Open space in all directions.

His gaze stops back at the Exit door. He decides, moves to the side of the door. Ambush. He's BREATHING HARD, waiting for the door to open.

THE KILLER swings silently down from above him, hanging upside down from the roof, SNAPS his neck with a quick twist. Man #1 COLLAPSES, dead.

The Killer swings down, lands on the street in front of the body.

3 MAIN TITLES 3

4 EXT. STORAGE UNIT ESTABLISHING - DAY 4

The sign says "LOCH & KEY AMERICAN MINI STORAGE"

5 EXT. STORAGE UNIT EXIT DOOR - DAY 5

WES CHILCOTT, 32, walks out the Exit door. He has a lean, finely-cut body in jeans and a well-worn T-shirt, blue eyes, tattoos, short, choppy brown hair.

(CONTINUED)

JOELY MCCULLOUGH, 29, too pretty to ignore, ever, very can-do and dressed in workout-wear-sheik, drives up in her Land Rover and parks just past the door.

She hops out, pops open the back of her car, and pulls out a heavy box. He eyes her, skeptical about her chances with that box.

WES

Need a hand?

JOELY

No. Uh, no...

WES

(standing still)

Have fun.

JOELY

...uh...OK.

She realizes her hands are full and the door is closed. Wes lets her twist on the hook for just long enough, then opens the door.

JOELY (CONT'D)

Thanks.

He nods, lights a cigarette, checks his watch.

INT. STORAGE UNIT HALLWAY - DAY

Joely SLAMS the door to her unit shut, satisfied. Wes is just walking in.

WES

Well, hi.

She passes him on her way out the door. She smiles but doesn't say a word.

INT. STORAGE UNIT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Joely walks in and Wes's storage unit door is open, a wall of boxes. With a cigarette in one hand, Wes closes the door quickly. He doesn't say a word.

8 INT. STORAGE UNIT HALLWAY - DAY

8

Joely is taking her time moving a short stack of boxes from a rolling cart to her open unit, glancing every few seconds at Wes's closed unit door. She catches herself looking and laughs to herself. She closes her door with a THUD.

9 INT. KICKBOXING CLASS - AFTERNOON

9

Joely works out on heavy bags with her best friend, ABBEY JONES, 29, great-looking, fit and more woman than the average guy can handle.

ABBEY

You were looking for him.

JOELY

There you go. You caught me, Abbey. Congratulations.

ABBEY

You were hoping he'd be there.

JOELY

I was not. It was like an experiment in sociological serendipity. How often can two people just happen to find each other hauling shit to their storage unit at the same time.

ABBEY

Right. And you were hoping he'd be there to prove your unified theory of the relative biceps.

JOELY

Go ahead, indulge your fantasies. I'm trying to elevate this discussion to encompass the concepts of shared experience and... community.

ABBEY

...with Bam Bam at the storage unit. Don't kid yourself.

JOELY

Come on, I can kid myself a little.

(CONTINUED)

A beat.

ABBEY

How are you feeling? Still going
through with it?

Joely takes her turn at the heavy bag.

JOELY

No.

(kick)

Yes.

(punch)

Joely throws her gloves on the floor.

JOELY (CONT'D)

Maybe.

10

EXT. STORAGE UNIT - DAY, A WEEK LATER

10

As Joely drives up, Wes is talking quietly with PEGGY
LOCH, 53, a short, capable-looking woman in shorts. They
stop talking. He hands Peggy an envelope and cinches up
the padlock.

Peggy grins big at Joely and shuffles off. Wes gives
Joely his full attention as she steps out of her car.
She tries not to notice, and he walks up to her.

WES

Hi.

Joely is uncharacteristically flustered.

Wes pulls a pack of American Spirits from his back
pocket, offers her one.

JOELY

Uh, no, no thanks, I quit.

WES

Huh. Suit yourself, 't's your
funeral.

He puts the cigarette behind his ear.

WES (CONT'D)

Need a hand?

JOELY

I got it, thanks.

(CONTINUED)

She pops the back of her Land Rover open and goes for the boxes. As she slowly opens the back window, she sees him leaning against the outside wall, one foot resting on the door behind him, lighting his cigarette.

ABBEY (V.O.)

Wow, I think I'm in love.

Abbey and Joely are post-gym-breakfasting.

JOELY

You are so easy.

ABBEY

You gotta hand it to him, guy's got style. He's working you perfectly at every turn, with the one-syllable words and the cigarettes.

JOELY

American Spirits.

ABBEY

Yeah, he's got your number.

Abbey acts out Joely's description of Wes's posing, fake-smoking and come-hithering at Joely with buckets of extra sex.

ABBEY (CONT'D)

Hi. Hi. Uh. Hi. Wha? Hi.

Joely laughs and throws the newspaper at her. Pages fly around the entrance of PARKER MCCULLOUGH, Joely's husband, 31, good-but-not-too-good-looking with dark blond hair and a good sense of his own power.

He raises an eyebrow to the airborne newsprint as he pours his coffee.

PARKER

You've been reading Robert Novak's column again.

At Parker's arrival, Joely falls into their practiced routine. She pulls creamer out of the fridge and adds it to his mug while he drops in three cubes of sugar. She starts an English muffin for him in the toaster.

JOELY

What can I say? I get emotional
about the news.

PARKER

I know what's really going on
here.

(to Abbey, with deep
intensity)

What'd you say to my girl?

ABBEY

(innocent)

Me?

PARKER

Things don't get thrown about in
this kitchen unless somebody says
something. I should know.

JOELY

Oh, Parker, it's just too awful!
Abbey accused me of looking at
another man!

PARKER

Who is he? I'll kill 'im.

Toast POPS up

PARKER (CONT'D)

Wait...

He takes a bite of the toast, then with his mouth full:

PARKER (CONT'D)

I'll kill 'im.

He butters the toast.

ABBEY

Oooh, that's a great idea for a
reality show. Jealous husbands
hunt and kill the secret lovers in
their ladies' lives. Next week on
"The Other Man."

PARKER

I think it's been done.

ABBEY

How's the new show?

(CONTINUED)

PARKER

It's awful; totally reprehensible.
It's a new low for reality TV.
Get this, the twist is that the
man all these women are trying to
date is actually a woman -- but --
she's a lesbian!

ABBEY

Great, now you've ruined it for
me.

JOELY

He's serious.

PARKER

And the money keeps a-rollin' in.
I do it all for you, baby.

JOELY

And my lover.

PARKER

Yes, I do it for me, too.
(quick kiss)
Time to make the doughnuts.

The two women are silent until the front door SLAMS.

JOELY

Nice.

ABBEY

Oh, please. He didn't --

JOELY

No, I appreciate it, really.

ABBEY

You're the one who --

JOELY

I'm not the one who anything.

A beat

ABBEY

What the hell is wrong with you,
honestly. Parker's amazing.

JOELY

That, that whole act was for you.
He's a completely different person
when it's just the two of us.

(CONTINUED)

ABBEY

Yeah, yeah, says you.

JOELY

The way he looks at me sometimes,
I swear, I think he wishes I was
dead.

ABBEY

You read way too much into it.
Besides, you can't take that stuff
personally. Men are like babies:
you think they're wishing your
death, but it's really just gas.

JOELY

(perfectly serious)
Hm... maybe we should have a baby.
Maybe that would...
(trails off)

ABBEY

Um, Joely, No!

Joely laughs. Gotcha.

ABBEY (CONT'D)

Oh, thank the good goddam Lord.

JOELY

No danger there. That peck you
just saw was the most physical
contact we've had in six months.
I think it really is over.

ABBEY

Or... you're addicted to the
chase, and your fairy tale romance
isn't magical enough...

JOELY

Shut it.

ABBEY

...and you're looking for an
excuse to hate Parker so it will
be easier for you to leave him,
because way back a hundred years
ago your father never blah blah
blah.

JOELY
(suddenly very blue)
That must be it. It's the blah
blah blah that always gets you.

12 INT. STORAGE UNIT - LATER

12

Joely is sitting on a box in her storage unit, crying.
Her phone RINGS.

CLOSE UP: The phone display. "PARKER"

JOELY
Oh, for chrissakes!

She powers the phone off, pushing the button as hard as
she can. She flings the phone out the door, narrowly
missing Wes, who's walking past.

WES
Woah.

JOELY
Oh, um...
(wiping her eyes)
...it slipped.

WES
Happens.

Wes collects her phone while she collects herself. He
hands it back to her.

WES (CONT'D)
Little late-night phone-toss?

JOELY
Nothin' like it.

WES
Or you're stalking me.

JOELY
That's it. You caught me.

WES
What's your name, stalker?

JOELY
Joely. Jo.

WES
(shaking his head)
Idunno... sounds fake.

JOELY
It is. What's your fake name?

WES
Some stalker you are.

JOELY
I'm just testing you.

WES
Wes.

JOELY
Wes.

WES
Jo.
(beat)
Ain't you got someplace better to
cry in, Jo?

JOELY
Oh, I paid extra for an industrial
strength unit, built for even the
deepest sob-fest. There are tear
ducts built right into the walls.

WES
Funny.

JOELY
Great, well at least I've got
that.

WES
You're not so special. These
things are all full of sob
stories.

JOELY
Storage unit philosophy?

WES
Nah, just...

JOELY
No, I get it. Why else do people
get a storage unit? They're
waiting around to move, they're
moving to a smaller place...

WES

Wife won't let 'em keep all their
precious shit in the garage.

JOELY

You're married?

WES

Not anymore.

She waits for him to ask her the same question. He
doesn't. He finishes his cigarette and flicks it away.

WES (CONT'D)

So you wanna get a drink? Little
place right up the street, nothin'
fancy. Gotta keep your strength
up, for the crying.

JOELY

That... is maybe the worst idea
I've ever heard.

Establishing shot. A neon sign proudly beams, one at a
time "El"... "Seco"... "Sushi"... then all three together.

XIAN ["Shahn"] slings sushi and drinks. The bar is
sparsely populated.

Joely and Wes are doing (another) "Flaming Yager" at the
bar. Xian lights two shots of Jägermeister, drops them
into mugs of Guinness, and Joely and Wes go for it.
Joely only gets halfway through.

WES

Ah, that's it! I win!

JOELY

(d-r-u-n-k drunk)
I did not! Wait, what?

WES

Oh, yeah, OK.
(to Xian)
That's a water for the lady.

JOELY

He calls me lady!

WES

And her name's Jo. Jo the lady.

JOELY

This is fun! This is fuckin' fun!
This is, like, fuckin' fun,
y'know?

WES

I know.

JOELY

(giggling, too loud)
What a divey sushi place! Thank
god we're not eating, right?
Right?

WES

OK, let's --

Xian drops off two waters in mugs, and Joely reaches for
her half-drunk beer. Wes deftly scoots it away from her
and pushes the water into her hand.

JOELY

Sneaky. Wait, I forgot: you won!
You get a prize!

WES

I'm thinkin' I probably do.

JOELY

You wanna get outta here, Wes?

WES

I'm thinkin'... I probably do.
Drink up.

She reaches for the beer again. He stands up and drops
cash on the counter.

WES (CONT'D)

Careful, you're gonna hurt
yourself.

He slides the other mug of water toward her.

WES (CONT'D)

Stick to the strong stuff.

She slams the water back, then PLOPS the mug on the bar.

(CONTINUED)

JOELY

That's how you down a water like a lady, people! Watch and learn!

WES

Yeah, let's get you outta here.
(with a nod to the barkeep)
Thanks, Xian.

XIAN

Watch yourself.

WES

Me or her?

XIAN

Exactly.

JOELY

Arigato, Xian!

XIAN

I'm Vietnamese, but, you know, you're welcome.

JOELY

(standing up)
Well, whatever they say! You say!
(sitting back down)
Woah!
(gripping the bar)
I might need a minute.

Wes sits back down next to her.

A TOUGH GUY at the other end of the bar HOLLERS over.

TOUGH GUY

Hey! Your girl's drunk.

WES

Ya think?

JOELY

I'm not his girl.

TOUGH GUY

Whose girl are you, drunk-ass loud-mouth?

WES

(warning)
Woah.

(CONTINUED)

JOELY

I'm a lady.

WES

Watch it, man.

TOUGH GUY

Oh, I'm watchin' it right now. I
been watchin' it all night.

JOELY

Aw, thank you.

(to Wes, pointing at
Tough Guy)

He's nice.

TOUGH GUY

She finally drunk enough you can
hit that shit, or should I order
your slut another round?

In one fluid motion, Wes kicks his bar stool out from
under him and crosses the bar in two long strides.

The Tough Guy has just long enough to stand up and take
Wes's CRACK across the jaw.

Wes fights like he knows what he's doing and learned from
doing it a lot, all style and smile and love of punching
stuff. The other guys are straight-up goons.

TOUGH GUY'S BUDDY gets up from the bar and takes a swing
at Wes. He dodges backward, leans in with a soft, fake
right then NAILS the guy with a left uppercut.

Tough guy is back up and takes a swing at him. Wes
turns, but takes a PUNCH in the right shoulder.

He reels, then recovers and swings wide with the one good
punch he knows he has left in that arm, leaning in hard
and SPLITS the guy's lip with the back of his fist.

He grabs the guy by the back of the head and KNEES him
once in the gut, knocking the wind out of him.

Wes is grabbed from behind; he spins around and almost
clocks Joely.

JOELY

(terrified)

We have to go. We have to get out
of here. Right now.

Wes looks the two guys over, then sees Joely's fear.

(CONTINUED)

JOELY (CONT'D)

Please!

WES

Sorry, Xian.

XIAN

I got it.

Joely pulls him out the door.

XIAN (CONT'D)

Alright fellas, pick up a bar stool and sit on it. Who wants unagi?

Joely pulls Wes out the door and down the street.

WES

What the hell just happened? I was fine.

JOELY

Forget it. Let's just get out of here. Now.

WES

Where we goin'?

JOELY

I don't care. C'mon, let's go.

Wes checks his watch.

JOELY (CONT'D)

(paranoid)

Why are you checking your watch? Tell me what's going on.

WES

What are y...

Joely backs away from him and looks all around her as she fishes through her purse. She pulls out her phone and POWERS it back on, then drops it back into the purse when he grabs her hands. She GASPS, startled.

WES (CONT'D)

(tenderly)

What's got you so spooked?

She searches his eyes.

JOELY

I... I'm sorry. I thought...
that's just something he would do.

WES

Oh, would he?

JOELY

Oh, no, I mean, I just...

WES

(kindly)
Hey, shut up.

She smiles.

WES (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna let anything happen
to you. I mean it.

A beat.

JOELY

(softly)
I believe you.

WES

Let's take a walk, OK?

JOELY

OK.

And they're off.

Joely and Wes walk. Wes is very alert, very aware of
everything around them. Joely keeps almost reaching for
his arm, then thinking better of it.

JOELY

It's the only thing that's just
mine, y'know? Nobody tells me
what to do with it, I can put
whatever I want in it, nobody
cares about a stupid storage unit.

WES

I get that.

JOELY

Had to pay twice as much a month
to go straight cash, not have my
name on it.

WES

That's the way to go.

JOELY

Every other place wanted a goddam
credit card and a picture goddam
I.D.

WES

Sure.

JOELY

Not to mention the fact that it's
off the earth. I was abducted by
aliens, right over there.

WES

So the boxes are full of, what,
beauty cream and bon bons?

JOELY

Oh, um, you know, you do a few
acting roles, make a little money
and everybody wants a piece of
you. Manager, agent, publicist...

WES

Gotcha.

JOELY

But it all comes with strings.
"With strings attached." Never
mind the fact that I haven't acted
since --

(stopping abruptly)

You're a nice guy, Wes. I
wouldn't have thought.

WES

How about we go back to your
place? No strings.

JOELY

(beat, then)

No.

WES

Sorry. I'm not such a nice guy, I
guess.

(CONTINUED)

JOELY

We could go back to yours.

Wes smiles.

WES

Yeah, that's not exactly...

JOELY

I knew it. You're married, right.

WES

No, I'm not. It's just...

JOELY

...just what?

WES

It's not, uh, nice. I just can't see you goin' to my place in your Land Rover and your two hundred dollar T-shirt.

Joely looks down.

WES (CONT'D)

Oh man, I'm sorry. I didn't mean--

JOELY

No I'm... well, I wouldn't actually call this a T-shirt, really, but I think I paid a hundred and fifty dollars for it. Jesus.

WES

I'm sayin'.

JOELY

So I'm the prissy, judgmental rich girl who thinks she's too cool to live, and you're the hot, mysterious guy who's good in a bar fight with the American Spirits.

(beat)

Bum a smoke, Wes?

Wes slides out a cigarette. She holds it to her mouth and he lights it for her. They have a moment, very close.

(CONTINUED)

JOELY (CONT'D)
Yeah, that did it. Quit fuckin'
around and take me to your place,
Wes.

A beat.

WES
(big smile)
OK.

17 EXT. STORAGE UNIT - NIGHT, LATER

17

Wes leads Joely by the hand. She's not stumbling anymore, but she has to focus on putting one foot in front of the other.

JOELY
(seeing her car)
Oh, if you think I can drive
anywhere, you're --

Wes covers her mouth and looks her in the eyes. He puts two fingers to his mouth: SHH.

18 INT. STORAGE UNIT - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

18

Wes and Joely enter through the Exit door. Motion-detect lights turn on as they enter the hallway.

JOELY
Ho-lee crap this place is creepy
at night.

Wes unlocks the padlock on his unit and replaces it with another "dummy" padlock from his pocket. He looks around quickly, then opens the door to reveal:

A wall of boxes, floor to ceiling.

JOELY (CONT'D)
Wow. Um. Boxes.

Wes pushes on a spot in the middle of the boxes and it swings open, a door into the storage unit. He leads Joely inside.

19 INT. STORAGE UNIT: WES'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS 19

Wes and Joely enter a large space beyond the box-wall, lit only by the light from the outside hall. Wes pulls the door to the unit closed, leaving them in darkness.

JOELY (O.S.)

Woah, woah, woah. Hang on, there.

Wes turns on the lights.

His storage unit is decked out as an apartment. A hammock stretches across one wall. Above it, a net full of ladies' panties and bras.

A weight set and a stand-alone chin-up bar rest against one wall. The mattress and box springs sit on the floor, and in one corner, a tall loft built from 2x4s, decked out with two beach chairs, a TV and a cooler between them.

Two small fridges, one on top of the other. A peep-hole reveals a fish-eye mirror mounted in the hallway outside. Wes pulls a small lever by the door: "the lock"

20 INT. STORAGE UNIT HALLWAY - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS 20

The padlock on Wes's door pulls itself closed with a CLICK. The fluorescent lights go dark.

21 INT. STORAGE UNIT: WES'S PLACE - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS 21

JOELY

Woah.

WES

You OK?

JOELY

Yeah, yeah, I just... I can't believe this. How do you... ?

WES

I run the power from the main office, and the satellite for the TV. Had to climb up through the crawl space, but it works. Shower at the gym every morning, shave when I feel like it. Can't cook or they'll notice the smell, but I can offer you somethin' cold.

(CONTINUED)