

## The Hungry Hungry Cop

by groundhog7s

The days of a police officer are filled with life and death situations all of the time. It's truly one of the most dangerous occupations out there. There have been numerous cops who have sacrificed their lives for the good of others and have earned themselves an honorable death.

But my life? Eh, not quite.

My name's Frank. Or at least it was (do ghosts still need names?) I was your average, run of the mill beat cop working the streets of New York for almost fifteen years. And let me tell you, you see a lot in this town. Just about anything you can think of can happen in this town (and usually does). I've been around long enough I thought I'd seen it all, but one night I saw something I ain't never seen before.

*(Is it dinner time yet?)*

Never mind the slobbering idiot down there. You know how sometimes people say their stomach's talking to them? Well, I that happens to me all of the time now, but it really is talking. But I'm getting to that.

*(Well, is it?)*

If you try hard enough, you can tune out that annoying voice. But if it gets too bad I'll just button my shirt. Anyway, back a few weeks ago (when I was still one of the living) I was working the night shift with my partner, Ed. Eddie and me had just finished checking into a domestic disturbance and were planning on grabbing a bite to eat when a call came in about some activity at the Sedgewick Hotel (something about a bunch of janitors or something shooting of fireworks in the building). Now, normally you'd find something strange like that at some of the more run down motels around here, but there's always your good share of weirdos in the richer places, too. Since we were just a few blocks away Ed radioed back and said we'd check it out and headed that way. It seemed my stomach was going to have to wait.

*(I don't like waiting. Let's eat.)*

Shut up, you little punk. Anyway, once there, we headed up to the 12<sup>th</sup> floor where the call came from. I figured we could handle some drunks with bottle-rockets without any back-up so we split up to find them faster. I headed left out of the elevator and Eddie went right. Look around, call back it's all okay, hit a diner and call a night. Sounded like a good plan. And it would have been, but right around the time I was going to call an 'all clear' to Ed, I hear this huge commotion down around the end of the hallway I was in. I head on down that way and turn left into the next corridor. From what I could see already, somebody had been trashing the place. As I got near the end of the hall, I started seeing what looked like flaming skid-marks along one of the walls. These lead up to a room service cart that had smashed into the wall at the end of the hallway. From the looks of it and the burning smell in the air, some yo-yo must've hooked up a rocket to it. I looked around and didn't see anybody so I went a little closer to see if I could tell what they were shooting off in here. I couldn't see any evidence immediately, so I called my partner to let him know what I found.

Now, what I did next wasn't the brightest thing I've ever done. Of course, since it got me in the predicament I'm in now, I suppose that's an understatement. While I was waiting for Eddie to join me, I figured it was a shame to let some of the food from the cart go to waste while my stomach was in knots begging for something.

*(So if I beg, then we can eat?)*

So, I looked to see if anything looked untouched and found the juiciest looking turkey leg I'd ever seen. It had landed on the cloth covering after the cart crashed and was just calling my name out. The only way it could have been any better was if there had been some dressing and cranberry sauce with, but when you're hungry you'll settle for whatever you find.

*(Can we find something now?)*

So, I took a bite. A big bite. And another. As I was chewing on it, I realized that it wasn't really juicy, but it had more of a slimy feel to it. Then, as I tried to chew some more, the unexpected happened. Here, in mid-bite, would be the defining moment of my life. As I said before, being in this profession puts you in situations that have you staring down death in the eyes, just to see who's going to blink first. I had never seen a lot of action in my time on the force, but was always prepared for the day when I'd be looking into the eyes of a gunman with a hostage or some lunatic with a bomb strapped to him. I was prepared for that day when my life and my training would finally mean something and I'd jump into action and save the day. But when I heard a sound behind me and turned to face it, I wasn't prepared to see some little green thing flying straight at me (they didn't ever prepare me for that kind of situation in the academy). This thing was slimy and gross and looked like it must've crawled out of Lady Liberty's nose. It was disgusting and strange and coming at me. All my training and experience had trained me for this moment. It was fight or flight time. And I choked.

Literally.

I guess in the shock of seeing what was before me, I must have swallowed the turkey down the wrong pipe. I didn't notice at first until I tried to yell at the thing and nothing came out. I tried to take a breath and just felt a big lump in my throat take its' place. I tried coughing, but got nothing. Suddenly, I could care less what that thing was or where it came from as I frantically tried to get that bird out of my esophagus. It seemed the more I struggled, the worse it got. I fell to my knees and started pounding on my stomach to try and force it back up. I started to feel dizzy and knew I was going to blackout soon and all I could think about was how this was how it was all going to end. I've been shot twice, stabbed once and survived two divorces and it's a turkey that gets me in the end. Everything goes black and I start to hear Ed's voice yelling at me, but I can't respond. And then that was it. The end.

*(If it was the end, then why am I still hungry?)*

Yeah, I guess it wasn't the end, just the end of my time to be counted among the living. At first, everything after that was black. I could hear Eddie some and the voice on the other end of his radio. I heard some paramedics later and even heard the coroner pronounce me dead, but I wasn't really that interested. It felt like one of those 'out of body' experiences' people talk about, where you're floating over your body. It probably felt like that because it was. But all I could think

about was my life. There was so much to think about. So many regrets, so many mistakes, so many things I'd never get the chance to do. Then I thought about my family. I thought about my kids. I thought about Ed. Then I thought about that turkey. I could still taste it. I started to smell cake (I think I saw some on the cart). And then I thought about pie. And then I realized that's all I could think about. I just died, but, man, I was still starving.

*(How do you think I feel? Can't you finish this story up so we can go eat?)*

All right already, I'll hurry it up. So, I'm there and I'm thinking about all of this food and I hear this muffled voice calling my name over and over. I called out,

'I'm here St. Pete! I'm ready to go through them pearly gates! What do I need to do?'

And this voice answered back to me,

'Get me some cake or something. I'm starved!'

I'm no theological expert or anything, but that didn't sound very biblical to me. I also realized that the sound wasn't coming from above me, but somewhere below me (which didn't seem like a good sign to me, if you know what I'm saying). I called out again and asked where he was. The voice told me to open my eyes and unbutton my shirt. I slowly opened my eyes and noticed everyone was gone. I also noticed I was floating about a foot off the ground. The voice told me to hurry and open my shirt and I started unbuttoning. As I got a few buttons open, I noticed these two yellow eyes staring up at me. I finished opening and there was a huge mouth to go with them.

*(Ta da!)*

And that's the moment when I wondered if I really had gone to Hell.

*(You flatter me. Can we eat yet?)*

The best I can figure is that when some people die, they keep doing what they were doing when they kicked. Since then I've seen the undead fishing off the docks, jogging through Central Park and even a guy with eternal constipation down in one of the stalls at Grand Central. Me, I'm just hungry all of the time. Mix that up with whatever supernatural slime stuff that was on that turkey I choked on and you end up with an extra mouth to feed.

*(That's right, you've got an extra mouth to feed. So, feed me, Seymour.)*

I haven't forgotten about you (as much as I try). We're almost there.

So, being dead isn't all that bad. I still hit the old places I used to eat at on my beat just to remind me of old times. You hear they say that the Donut Hole over on 116<sup>th</sup> and Broadway is haunted? Yeah, that's us. Or what about Slotski's Deli, just off the turnpike? That's us, too. And so is this guy's hotdog stand here outside the stadium. I used to love eating ballpark dogs as a kid. Ah, I guess some habits die hard, even when you die. But what can I say, it's a living.

Well, I guess not.

*(Hey Frank, can you pass me the relish?)*