



GOOD BOYS
Episode 1
All I survey

Story by Steven LaFond



WITCHEVER PATH INTRO

The summer heat and the near constant rain in New England are battling for our attention. The weather cannot choose its preferred method to challenge our plans, and so we adapt the best we can by making choices of our own. Ready for a few more?

Welcome back to Witchever Path, the interactive horror anthology that allows you to vote along with the rest of our listeners to decide the choices of our protagonists and change the course of our story. Sometimes, your decisions have led to happier endings for our tales. But other times, calamity and chaos reign. But you, ultimately, move the story along.

This story is different than the others we have done before. We've featured the narratives of the historically marginalized in America. Stories of people with disabilities, gender identities, different races, and ethnicities, and outcasts of every flavor. But there's a group we've never focused on as our main characters, and we're doing that tonight.

A.A. Milne once said, "Some people talk to animals. Not many listen though. That's the problem."

In this story, you'll be close to the perspective of house pets, placed in a scary situation. We're not going to lie to you, there is violence and death in this story, lurking almost everywhere. And our two heroes will face danger. We'll make sure our content warnings are clear in the episode descriptions, and if you need to take a break, we get it.

This particular episode is told from the point of view of Rico, the expert mouser and hunter of the house. The POV was chosen across social media by our listeners. With that said there will be animal-on-animal violence.

Without any further ado, Witchever Path Presents Good Boys, Episode 1. All That I Survey.

[rustling through papers and trash. Chipmunk noises. Then the cat pounces, chipmunk scream and then the crunch]

RICO NARRATOR

The taste of the intruder is satisfying. Chipmunks have been exploring the garage since the Spring, squeezing through the tiny crack between the electric door and the wall. Rico has caught them all. At least one every two weeks. The chipmunks don't seem to wonder where their kinfolk have gone. But Rico's litterbox is kept clean, and he leaves no survivors to warn the others. He is the white death of this cave. It is his domain.



The lifeless rodent hangs from Rico's jaws as he pads over to the hole Alana and Tom cut into their wall for him to come and go into the house as he pleased. They put his food in the garage so Otter, his older brother doesn't attempt to eat it. They were tired of nursing the scratches on Otter's snout, from Rico's correction, but the dog is lovable otherwise.

Rico slides through the hole, its little flap gently caressing the top of his head and then the length of his spine. His trophy dangling from his jaws, he passes his napping dog, Otter, whose nostrils flare at the smell of the fresh kill. Rico leaves the rousing dog behind and pushes his way into Alana's office.

She is staring at her computer on her desk, her hands a flurry of clicks on its keyboard. He considers a leap onto the keyboard, to present the meal to his favorite person for them to share. But her hands are moving too quickly. Instead, he rubs against her legs and steps into the shadowy underbelly of the desk, where he drops the chipmunk close to her bare feet. He's not hungry yet, but some recognition is in order. He estimates the gap between her legs and the desktop for a moment, and when she shifts her legs a bit, he leaps into her lap, careful not to use his claws on her bare skin.

[Alana laughs]

Oh, Rico!

Momma's gotta get this done.

Oh little man, why are you so cute?

[laughs Alana pets him, Rico purrs]

Her hands are soft. She brushes them down his spine. It feels good. Rico guides her hand to the spots he wants touched. She continues to sing at him, and then... her thighs stiffen and she stops petting him.

[ALANA's foot taps the corpse]

What?

AAAAAAAAAA

RICO!

OH MY GOD.

TOMAS! TOMAS!

There is safety behind the delicious plant next to her desk. She screams for Tomas more and more until he comes downstairs. Otter is with him, his nails clacking against the floor. Rico can hear the dog sniffing at the air and the anticipation of his breathing. Sharing with Otter would have been easier.



TOMAS

[Concerned]

What's going on? Is everything all ---

Oh God.

All right, I'll be right back, stay calm.. Otter, Come.

Otter. LEAVE IT.

Otter, good. Let's go.

RICO

Tomas returns with paper towels and a bag. The way he lifts up the chipmunk and runs from the room is disappointing. Tomas and Alana go back to their work. Otter jumps up on the sectional couch in the living room, and yawns. Once he's settled in, Rico leaps up by his face and circles on the cushion before lying down. Otter is massive, but he is still the puppy that used to follow Rico around the house, curious and affectionate. Rico cleans Otter's ears and then naps next to his housemate.

[Loud pounding, OTTER begins barking.]

TOMAS

Coming!

ALANA

Who is it?

TOMAS

Camera shows two white guys.

Otter. Calm down!

ALANA

What do they want?

TOMAS

I don't know. They're dressed like they work at a Sprint store.

Otter, sit. SIT.

Stay. Stay.

[door opens]

TOMAS

Can I help you?

Voice

Yeah this is for you.



Just letting you know we're in the neighborhood.
Nice DOG.
Is he friendly?

TOMAS

No. Not when I don't want him to be.
Where in the neighborhood do you live?

VOICE

Doesn't matter. Just letting you know we're watching the neighborhood now and will be policing the street to keep it safe for the people who need protecting.
Dog's been pretty loud since we came around.
If he's aggressive with anybody, you'll see us again.
Also, no loud salsa music at night, okay?
There's good families on this block.

TOMAS

[offended, keeping control]
Get away from my door and don't come back, please.

VOICE

We're just here to let you know that we're looking out for our people here.

[Dog begins growl]

RICO Narrative

The strangers smell wrong. Rico walks past Otter. The dog's back hair is standing on end. His muscles are tense and ready to spring. And as Rico got closer to the door, he could smell something amiss. A foul thing, clinging to the men outside. Rico scampers past the door and up the stairs to the second floor, stopping halfway to watch the door.

Tomas is straight backed and firm. Otter has started to stand. Alana walked into the front hallway, and grabs onto Otter's collar, while the men continue to talk to Tomas. With most of the family in the hallway, Rico goes to the upstairs bathroom to his perch on the window. The soft carpet of his perch is comforting on his paws while he looked down at the driveway and side yard. It was there where Rico saw something. A man, wearing a black shirt and tan pants is



standing in the tree canopy between their yard and the neighbors. The man's exposed skin is bright pink, like the baby mice Rico had discovered in their old home. He appears to be unspooling some sort of yarn which he tied onto a branch above him. On the other end of the yarn was something small and shiny. The man looks at the house for a moment, his face looking angry. He then looks up at the window, and his eyes widen for a moment but then he laughs. The man spits at the driveway, and walked away, through the trees.

TOMAS

[assertive]

Get the fuck out of here, before we have a problem.

[door slams]

ALANA

[coming in concerned]

What was that?

TOMAS

[sound of paper]

It's a fucking hate group.

I'll call the neighbors.

There's no way they live here.

I'm gonna grab a couple more cameras today.

They threatened Otter.

ALANA

Should we call the cops?

Just to have a report?

TOMAS

No, let's take a picture of this first and post it.

If fascists are around, people got to know.

RICO

The rest of the day is tense in the house. So Rico spends most of it upstairs, seated on his perch. Occasionally the sun glints off of the thing the man tied to the branch. When it does, Rico has to blink away the bright flash from his eyes. By sundown, Otter and Rico are fed, and Tomas takes Otter for a walk. Alana is cleaning the house, and the smell of the lemon disinfectant burns Rico's sinuses, so he heads to living room, stretches across the arm of the sectional and digs his claws into the fabric before sleeping.



When night brings silence, Rico snuggles up to Otter and they sleep for hours. Until the sound of metal bending came from the garage. Rico and Otter lift their heads up, instantly alert.

The two of them, in unison walk through the dark, into the kitchen.

[small sounds from the garage]

There is something in the garage. And a foul smell, like death wafts through the pet door. Otter makes a small, unsure whine. His head can fit into the hole, but not much else. He stands in front of the pet door, turning his head to Rico. Slowly, Rico enters the dark of the garage.

The rank smell of decay is thick in the air. In the darkness, Rico saw the movement first, a rapid, quiet scurry from the hole near the garage door and the workbench.

Rico leapt onto the chest freezer and peered over its edge, looking into the corner. Waiting to see what rodent had been so brazen to enter his lair.

What came out of the corner gave him pause. A pale snout slowly emerged from behind one of the worktable legs. Long, sharp teeth chittering in its jaws. A rat. It did its best to stay in the shadows, but Rico could see it clearly. One of its forepaws gripped the metal leg as it began to shift its body. Rico readied to pounce on the rat as it started to climb up the table. Except it didn't. The rat walked on its hind legs out from behind the desk leg, its head turning left and right while it carefully stepped around the toolbox Tomas had placed on the floor. In its right forepaw, it appeared to be holding something. A long, sharpened bone.

Rico stood still, waiting for his moment. The rat sniffed the air and observed the litterbox. The wet, matted fur on its head bristled. It was at this moment Rico made his move.

[Sound of leaping down, shriek of rat thing]

Rico's claws sink into the rat's midsection as he brings his teeth down onto the intruder's head, locking on, but careful not to crush the skull. With a snap of his neck, he tosses the rat into the air. The rodent shrieks as it flips tail-over-head. But when it lands on the ground, rather than attempt to run away, it charges at Rico. It's chittering sounds aggressive. With the bone in its forepaws it stabs at Rico, narrowly missing his eye.

Otter barks from behind the door, and the rat takes another jab at Rico, this time at his neck. The bone bites in. The pain is intense. Nothing has hurt him since the squirrel. And that was just a scratch.

[RICO yowls, Otter barks loudly, rat is chittering... some human words]

Rico bites the foreleg holding the bone and his incisors meet through the foul tasting flesh of the rat. It screams, but not like a rodent, like Alana or Tomas. The bone is dropped. The rat's teeth sink into Rico's right ear. With its free foreleg, it strikes him in the eye, which makes him let go. Rico lets out a defiant hiss, but the thing snarls and leaps forward. Prey doesn't fight like this. He knows it won't stop. And so he runs for his door back to home. He feels the rat grab



onto his tail. Rico shakes him loose and slides across the floor. Otter runs around the butcher block, out of sight. The rat steps through the pet door, its bloody arm hanging by its side. In the pale blue light from the oven's clock, the rat turns to face Rico, who is standing tall, back arched in front of the stove. Its eyes are glowing a sickly green, and are not on the side of its head, but nearly directly above its snout. It weaves from side to side, the bloody bone held in its good arm.

Rico is ready to fight and the rat makes a strange sound.
Like Tomas

[laughter]

It gets ready to pounce on Rico before stopping. Its eyes widen and it looks to the left just in time to see Otter's massive jaws close around its body. Otter shakes the rat while he bites down as hard as he can. The rat falls lifeless, in two pieces. Rico looks at up Otter and walks forward. The cut on his neck burns. The smell of the rat's viscera is pungent. But the kill is theirs. Rico bites into the remains in front of him. And then he hears Tomas and Alana coming down the stairs, their voices confused and groggy. As he quickly chews, a strange sensation focuses his ears.

ALANA

[whisper]

Go first, please.

TOMAS

[whisper]

Okay, stay behind me.

[calling out]

Otter. Come here.

RICO

The sounds. They make sense to Rico. They are scared and coming to see what's wrong. It's .. the meat. The meat gave him this. Otter looks at him, whines, he is uncertain. He is scared. Rico remembers cleaning the little puppy that became this big dog. The Good Boy, they call him Good Boy. It means... what he did, help. He is a *hunter* now.

He should have half of this. But Tomas and Alana will scream. They'll yell at Rico.

They will get rid of the meat. And then, then what?

Have to... think. If Otter eats, maybe Otter hears. But it tastes foul. What if it hurts Otter?

What can Rico do?



What does Rico do?

**Does he let his parents take the kill?
Does he hide some of it, to give to Otter later?**

Or Do you want to see what Otter does?

**You can vote now at WitcheverPath.com/vote
You'll have until July 19, 2023 to make your choice.**

**GOOD BOYS, Episode 1 was written by Steven and produced by Witchever Path.
It featured:**

**Journee LaFond as the Narrator
Jes Negrón as Alana
Armani Marquez-Chaves as Tomas
John Henry Deonte as Otter
Kevin Franklin Bowie as Rico**

**Foley by Witchever Path and Audio Hero.
The Witchever Path Theme song was written and performed by RYDR.**

Additional music comes from EpidemicSound.com:

**From Dusk by Andres Cantu
Spider Room by Ethan Sloan
Brain Copy Syntax Error by Oh the City
Save us by Phoenix Tale**

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