

STARRING GINO GALUCCI IN...
“CATERING”

The chaos surrounding the Carnal Contendership match made Gino feel right at home - and right at home is exactly where he was a few days later, needing to get back to his family to help with the restaurant. The birds were chirping in unison at 7:00am in the morning, as if singing the chorus from a song to Gino. Coming off the heels of the Carnal Contendership show, Gino was feeling energetic and ready for what was to come next, evident from the smile on his face.

So what exactly was next? First, he had to go to Galucci's to see how the family business was doing. As soon as he entered the pizzeria, the entrance bell sounded off signaling his arrival.

“What’s got you so cheery this morning?” Zo, Gino’s older brother, questioned from the entrance of the kitchen, annoyance obvious in his tone.

“Zo, I’m still buzzing from my FWA debut, I tell ya,” Gino said, leaning over the counter with a huge smile on his face.

He remembered how crazy the roar of the Las Vegas crowd was, unlike anything he’s experienced before. Being in the Sphere was such an experience that he almost forgot where he was as his theme music was playing.

“I wish you and pops were able to be there, Zo. It was so freaking amazing, you see. Words aren’t enough to explain it,” Gino said, still reminiscing of the feelings from just a few days ago.

Zo smirked, shaking his head disapprovingly. You could tell he wanted to say something, but he knew whatever he said to Gino would fall on deaf ears.

“Focus up, little brother. We’ve got things to do around ‘ere, ya bachagaloop,” Zo motioned over to a large pizza box on the other side of the counter. **“Bring that over to Mar next door,”**

“Mar?” Gino snapped back to reality. **“What’s up? Is he okay?”**

“He’s fine. Dad thought he’d like to hear from you after your FWA debut. We know how much of a superfan Mar is of the FWA,” Zo shrugged, retreating back into the kitchen.

“Where’s pops anyways?” Gino shouted into the kitchen.

“He’s out,” was the response Zo gave him.

Gino, unimpressed with the answer he received, thought better than to fight it and instead, grabbed the large box of pizza, tucked the edge under his arm, and made his way next door.



Gino entered the darkened storefront of the barbershop, the room eerily similar to a lab where experiments were being done. The barbershop was originally named Daveed's Cuts and was a Lebanese family-owned business that has been around for almost as long as Galucci's. It started with Mar's parents, Daveed Adour and Nadia Adour, who were both optometrists and were able to open up their own practice. When they saved up enough money, Daveed took a chance on one of his passions - grooming - and opened up the barbershop. Being one of the only optometrist clinics in Little Italy, Daveed and Nadia felt the stress and tiredness a family-owned business brought, which is also one of the reasons Daveed opened up the barbershop - to pamper not only himself, but his wife as well.

With both his parents having passed on, Daveed's dying wish was for Mar to take over the barbershop business and name it "Mar's Cuts" and to pass it on to his children so they can do the same. Well, Mar has a good amount of options, having five kids with five different women, all looking to fulfill the family wishes.

"Mar?" Gino called out, but received no response.

"Mar?" Gino cupped his right hand around the side of his mouth to increase his volume.

Gino heard shuffling from the back door before finally, a 5'10 pudgy man with an apron came out - it was Mar. Mar was in his 40s, with black and gray slick back hair with a strut like he had no care in the world. He embraced Gino before giving him a kiss on both cheeks.

“Gino baby, how’s you doing?”

“I’m good, Mar,” Gino paused, putting the box of pizza down. **“Pops wanted me to drop this off for you,”**

Mar scanned the box as a big smile came onto his face.

“Ahh your dad’s a good one, I tell ya. He makes the best meat lovers pizza my taste buds have ever tasted,” he said, opening the box, taking in the aroma of the pizza before motioning with a chef’s kiss gesture.

Gino nodded. Sensing he had done his part, he turned to leave.

“Ah ah ah - not so fast, Gino,” Mar wagged his finger side to side. **“You know I gotta ask about it,”**

“Do you though?” Gino retorted, clearly not wanting to have this conversation.

Mar grabbed Gino by both shoulders and shook him. **“Of course I do! How was it?! I can only imagine being in that situation with the Las Vegas crowd!”**

Gino shrunk metaphorically, looking at Mar funny. Mar composed himself almost immediately, putting his hands up in surrender.

“My bad,” Mar said, walking away a few feet from Gino. **“But really, how was it?”**

Gino stood there, looking up at the ceiling as if the answers to Mar’s question could be found there. Suddenly, he closed his eyes, remembering the night of his debut. He remembered being at gorilla position, hearing the roar of the Las Vegas crowd who were active all night with no signs of slowing down.

The funny thing is, he didn’t remember submitting any theme music to the producers, which worried him more than it should have. But he was finally here in the FWA and Gino wouldn’t let this small hiccup ruin what he’s been working so hard for. He took a deep breath and did some squats with pace to stay loose.

Gino’s concentration was broken up by the sudden loudness from the Las Vegas crowd who were cheering for Sawyer Xavier after an impressive showing in the match. Gino looked at the incident on the nearest screen next to him as Sawyer was eliminated by Alejandro Giunti with a hurricanrana.

Seeing that small piece of action hyped up Gino. He was bouncing on his feet, ready to go as the crowd started to count down from 10. At the one second mark, a very Italian piece of music began to play, putting a big smile on his face. He wasn't sure who it was, but Gino fist-bumped the nearest producer to him before running out of the gorilla position to the stage. Gino remembers being on that stage and instantly remembering the energy from the crowd. It probably wasn't the biggest ovation, but it was enough for Gino at that moment.

“Hello?” Gino briefly heard. **“Oi Gino, you there?”**

Mar snapped his fingers repeatedly, trying to get Gino's attention. After a couple of seconds, Gino twitched, snapping back to reality.

“Oh, sorry about that, Mar,” Gino said, almost embarrassed.

“It was that good, huh?” Mar quipped with a big smile on his face.

“It was,” Gino paused. **“It's unlike anything I've ever experienced, Mar,”**

Almost immediately, Mar pulled up two chairs and sat on one, inviting Gino to do the same. Gino looked at the chair hesitantly before looking back at Mar, who was excited as hell to hear more. Eventually, Gino decided to sit down.

“Thank you, Gino. Please continue what you were saying earlier,”

“As soon as my music hit, a sudden burst of energy came over me and I was ready for anything. It didn't matter who was in front of me,” Gino began motioning with his hands. **“Whether it was the terrifying Cyrus Truth, the dangerous Michelle von Horowitz, or even the World Champion, Jeremy Best, I had no fear and would face them head on,”**

Mar nodded, looking at Gino with stars in his eyes.

“Oh my, that Michelle von Horowitz - *ma che bella!*” Mar purred, instantly making Gino uncomfortable. **“Please tell me all about her,”**

“I don't know too much about her actually. There wasn't a chance for us to interact, unfortunately,”

Mar frowned for a moment, but understood.

“Just thinking about back in the day, you were helping me give haircuts not too long ago and look how far you've come now - you're a FWA superstar,” Mar said with enthusiasm.

Gino simply nodded.

“I better be part of your autobiography when you become famous, Gino. I gots to be,” Mar said, looking Gino straight in the eyes.

Again, Gino simply nodded.

“You could talk about your humble beginnings here in the barbershop and-”

Suddenly, the glass door to the barbershop swung open and in came Ian Smoltz. Ian was around the same age as Mar, but looked way younger, due to his Asian roots, but was just as pudgy as Mar.

“What’re you doing ‘ere, Ian?” Mar questioned, almost angrily, for interrupting his conversation with Gino.

“This is a barbershop, isn’t it? Ian quipped, being the smartass that he is. “I’m here for a haircut,”

“Fine fine,” Mar responded, getting off the chair, starting to prepare his equipment.

However, before Gino could leave, Mar put his hand on his shoulder.

“Gino, I got this sudden idea. Why don’t you cut Ian’s hair?”

“What? Why me?”

“C’mon, for old times sake,” Mar smacked him on his right shoulder, pointing towards the chair where Ian was sitting at,

As Gino approached the chair, Ian looked at the two of them sideways. **“Gino’s going to cut my hair?”**

“Indeed he is,” Mar said, nodding his head. **“I’m just gonna do a quick *scobendo* ‘ere and a *scobendo* there to tidy up the place.”**

Gino looked at Ian’s half curly and half straight hair, which confused Gino. It was probably that way because of Ian because half Asian and half African American. Looking at the tools at his disposal, Gino nodded his head before spraying some water on Ian’s head.



He finally decided on his weapons of choice for the haircut, a pair of scissors and a comb. He scanned Ian's hair once more, analyzing the areas that needed a cut. He combed some areas over, spraying more water.

"So what are you looking to do 'ere, Ian?"

"I usually go for a buzz cut, but I think I want something new," Ian paused, looking at himself in the mirror. **"I'm getting older and I'm looking to put myself out there more. Give me something trendy,"**

"Trendy huh?" Gino questioned, looking at Ian's square head and his other features in the mirror. **"Okay, I can make this work."**

"Awesome. Let's do it," Ian said with confidence.

"So Ian, how's the bar doing?" Gino asked, knowing Ian loves talking about his bar, which was right across the street from Galucci's and Mar's Cuts.

"The bar is doing okay. In fact-," at this point, Gino tuned him out.

Like a director of a symphony, Gino began cutting Ian's hair with sweet strokes and precision. Just a few feet away from him, Mar observed Gino with a big smile on his face, knowing Gino is right in his element.

Without using a razor, Gino was able to give Ian a splendid haircut - a top line fade with his hairline tapered to the right.

"Wow! This is awesome, thank you, Gino," Ian said, touching his new haircut. Ian tipped him well and walked out.

"That was fun," Gino said quietly, satisfied with the haircut he gave Ian.

"I knew you could do it," Mar said, startling Gino. **"Keep the tip, you've earned it, kid,"**

Gino and Mar shook hands as Gino was finally able to leave the barbershop.

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"Jack The Clipper huh?" Gerald questioned, looking at Gino if he had any who he was talking about.

"Yeah, he's quite dangerous, having stabbed his former tag team partner in the back with a pair of scissors," Gino said, shivering at the thought of what he just said. Meanwhile, Gerald was glad to know that Gino knew something about his next opponent.

"He's not one to take lightly," the Daredevil said, looking at Gino, who was moving around in the passenger seat of Gerald's Jeep.

"No, of course not," Gino said, shaking his head. He lowered his passenger seat in the car to an angle where he could be more comfortable.

The two friends were in Gerald's Jeep at the parking lot of the All-State Arena.

"How much longer are we going to be here?" Gerald questioned, clearly getting impatient.

"Not too much longer, I promise," Gino retorted, looking at his phone.

"While I haven't encountered Jack myself, I wouldn't put it past him to come up with some shenanigans in your match," Gerald said casually.

"He's got the Scissor Sisters with him too," Gino responded casually.

"The Scissor Sisters?" Gerald questioned, looking at Gino sideways.

“Yeah, the Scissor Sisters - Barbara and Dyeanne,” Gino said almost immediately.

“Alright, now I’m kind of scared about why you know so much about Jack,”

“What do you mean? Isn’t this all public knowledge?”

“I’m not sure about that, buddy,” Gerald said, shrugging his shoulders.

“Well, in any case, I like to do a deep dive on my opponents ‘ere, just so when we’re in a *slobbah-knockah*, they don’t pull out any surprises, you see?”

“Is that going to be enough?” Gerald questioned genuinely.

“Gino, there’s some things that are better left unanswered is what I’ll tell you,”
Gino said mysteriously, garnering a suspicious look from Gerald.

Suddenly, Gino receives a notification on his phone that lights up his face.

“It’s time, we’re going,” Gino said, removing his seatbelt. He pulls down the mirror of the car and makes himself look good, fixing his hair, making sure the best qualities of his face are present.

Gino walks out of the car with Gerald as they make their way backstage of the All-State Arena. As soon as they turned down the corridor, there was something in the air and both Gino and Gerald could smell it.

“Is that pizza I smell?” Gerald questioned, confused at the situation.

“You bet it is, *amico*,” Gino said, rubbing his hands together in excitement.



When they arrived in the catering area, the FWA staff were already munching down on pizza - smiles all around. The FWA staff spotted Gino and started clapping.

“You provided catering?” Gerald excitedly questioned amidst the clapping. Before Gino could even reply, Gerald grabbed a paper plate and began choosing his favorite pieces.

“Hope you all like it!” Gino exclaimed, shaking hands with those who haven’t gotten their hands on the greasy pizza just yet. **“Thank you!”**

Seeing the commotion in the catering area, Gino could spot a few wrestlers from afar who were just arriving at the arena. Konchu Hao, Mike Parr, Chris Peacock, and XYZ were some of the wrestlers Gino saw and motioned for them to come over. However, they all went their separate ways or maybe didn’t hear Gino - the latter is what Gino wants to believe.

When he turns around, he comes face-to-face with a fellow New Yorker, Brooklyn Steiner!

“Oh Brooklyn! I didn’t see you there. Please, have some pizza, it’s from my family’s business, Galucci’s in Little Italy in the Bronx,” Gino said enthusiastically, not noticing Brooklyn has already secured some slices.

Gino observed that Brooklyn put several pieces of cheese pizza on his plate. Brooklyn took a bite in front of Gino, the sweat starting to form on Gino’s forehead.

“Nothing like a classic cheese pizza, well done,” Brooklyn said, taking another bite, before patting Gino’s shoulder with his greasy hand then leaving.

Gino let out a sigh of relief, but started to panic again when he saw Michelle von Horowitz browsing the assortment of pizza on the table. He saw Gerald hyping up the pepperoni pizza that he was devouring to Michelle, who looked at Gerald with disgust.

“Wait wait wait,” Gino said towards the Connection, mostly at Michelle. **“Gerald told me you’re vegan, so I made sure to prepare this in case you came along,”**

Gino uncovered a few take out boxes from a plastic bag and offered the box to Michelle. She looked at it suspiciously, not knowing what was inside. She turned to Gerald to see if he knew what was inside, to which he responded with a shrug.

Upon opening the box, there was a vegan pizza in there, which was pretty much naan bread mixed in with some garlic and olive oil with a plastic container of hummus. Michelle’s eyes grew in volume, catching herself from salivating at the food put in front of her. Michelle nodded in Gino’s direction before taking another box and walking away.

“She loves it!” Gerald exclaimed, giving Gino a thumbs up.

Gino and Gerald bump fists and are all smiles until Gino spots someone in the distance. If Gino was being honest, there were some ulterior motives to this catering event, involving the mob of course. Gino motions with his head that he has to go somewhere, to which Gerald retorts with a frown. Gino can only shrug apologetically. In the far corner backstage of the All-State Arena, there was an elderly man sitting on a mobile crate, probably housing materials for the set up of FWA show. If Gino had to guess - the man was in his 50s, the grays showing up everywhere on his face - notably on his beard and his eyebrows. Gino met with Lou Colombo for the first time, a FWA staff member that helped with the set up of FWA events.

“You know, I was done with this life, Gino, but when I saw that you signed with the FWA, I knew I’d be right back in,” Lou said casually, offering Gino a handshake.

“I’m sorry to bring you back, Lou. I had no idea,” Gino said apologetically, shaking Lou’s hand. Lou scanned Gino’s expression to see if the sentiment was genuine. After a few moments, Lou tapped him on the shoulder, nodding his head.

“Your pops is a good man. Make sure to send him my regards, will ya?”

“I will,” Gino said, nodding his head.

“Now, do you have the stuff?” Lou said with his hands in his pockets.

“I do,” Gino said, reaching into his pocket. He retrieved a white envelope and handed it over to Lou. “It’s all in there,”

Lou accepted it, putting the envelope in his crossbody bag before taking out a folded piece of paper and handing it to Gino.

“I take it this won’t be the last time we see each other, Gino, so see you around, kid,” Lou said with not much energy before walking away.

Gino watched him walk away before returning back to Gerald at the catering area.

“What was that about?” Gerald inquired intently.

“Don’t worry about it,” Gino retorted, waving him off.

“Don’t tell me you’re mixing your worlds together,” Gerald looked at Gino with disappointment.

“It’s really not up to me,” Gino said with a defeated tone.

“Yes, it is!” Gino shouted a little too loud, garnering the attention of some FWA staff members. **“It’s totally up to you. If you’re going to do this, you’re gonna need to be all in, Gino. If not, there will be consequences,”**

“Gerald, you should know more than anyone that I’m all in on this. That’s why I planned this catering event. I want to show people my roots with Galucci’s and show them how legit we are,” Gino said with a proud look on his face.

“And that’s fine, but I want you to know that there may be repercussions to your actions,” Gerald said, pausing, hoping what he just said is understood by Gino. **“See what happened just earlier? What if someone had noticed you or worse, what if we have rival mob members here? We don’t know.”**

Gino pondered the possibility of this and deemed it noteworthy.

“All I can say is that being in this type of lifestyle has prepared me for many situations, which helps me with things in the ring as well, Gerald. Like c’mon, my next opponent is named Jack The Clipper - his story is sad and challenging, but he took it upon himself to use that energy and turn it in his favor, that’s a hell of a story,” Gino paused as he motioned his feelings with his hands towards Gerald.

Gerald looked unconvinced much to the chagrin of Gino.

“If you really want to know what Lou handed to me - it’s more intel on my opponent this week, Jack The Clipper,” Gino paused, removing the piece of paper from his right jeans pocket. **“Here, I have intel that might not be known to many people - secrets that Jack probably wants to keep. I’ve got what he ate this morning, what his routines are - even what the Scissor Sisters are up to.”**

Gerald’s eyes widened, blinking a few times, unsure of this method of Gino’s.

“When I said Jack ain’t surprising me with anything in the ring, I meant it,” Gino said adamantly. **“I guess there are some perks to this type of life.”**

Gino nodded his head, confident in his methods. He looked at Gerald, who still seemed unsure of it all.

“Everything I do has a purpose, Gerald. You and I are similar in many ways, but we are also different in many ways. I appreciate your support throughout this and I’m going to need it even more so now, but please understand that at the end of day, I’m doing things to benefit my family. And what happened earlier? It’s just a means to an end that I need to do,” Gino said firmly. Gerald let out a sigh, but ultimately understood Gino’s point. He put out his hand for a handshake and Gino immediately reciprocated as the two friends performed their special handshake.

“Now let’s eat!”