

## Where the Gum Goes (Monologue)

JOE: Ladies and gentleman of the comm—sorry, something in my eye, why does this keep happening to me—ladies and gentleman of the committee. Thank you for seeing me today, it's an honor to speak with you in person after sending all those emails. I'm here today, to raise an issue that has been pressing the pedestrians of Chicago for generations. Please forgive me if I become overly emotional; this is a very personal issue for me, as I have been a pedestrian myself, many times. The issue I present today has been overlooked, underestimated, and under our very feet for my entire life. Not a single person in the history of pedestrian safety has had the courage to bring this to the attention of the Pedestrian Welfare Committee as I have decided to do today. But something must be done.

I am talking, of course, about Sidewalk Gum Disposal—which goes by the street name SGD, or often “suhguhduh”. Now, I know what some of you are thinking, “Gum on the sidewalk? I've never seen gum on the sidewalk in my whole life.” Oh contraire Honorable Council-people! You wanna know something? You ready to have your minds blown? Those little black circles all over the sidewalk... in the street, on the manhole covers, on the stairs leading up to your fancy condos on Lakeshore Drive?! Those are not just sidewalk liver spots as claimed by TidePodDestroyer2567319 on the SGD subreddit. Those spots all over our sidewalks — yes, *our* sidewalks — are old, decrepit, spit-out, used up, chewed-up pieces of bubble gum.

Okay okay I still know what you guys are thinking—gosh dangit! ( *rubs his eye*) ugh! —“Who cares if there are little dots on the sidewalk? The ground is just for walkin' right?” Wrong. Our sidewalks are more than that. Our sidewalks are a symbol. All those discarded pieces of chewing gum are symbols. Every time you walk down the street and step on one of those pieces of gum you're sayin', “yeah, stay down there. You're old and used up and dirty and you don't taste good anymore and you don't even deserve a proper waste receptacle.” When you throw your gum wherever you please you're saying “Fuck you Chicago! You're disgusting already and we don't care—we're just gonna walk all over you!”

I'm sorry. I never curse. I didn't mean to get all worked up—god dangit! what is in my eyeball?! ( *rubbing his eye*)—I love this city. I love every person in this city and every corner of this city. And I love every person who lives in every corner of this city. I've lived here all my life. I walked these streets to school when I was a kid, I've slept at bus stops when I had nowhere to go. Just yesterday I had to pick up a mask out of the dumpster so I could go into taco bell to pick up my chalupa supreme.

All I ask, is that someone scrape the gum off the dang sidewalk. Give it a scrub once in a while. Or... I don't know, find better places for people to sleep. Or... if you can't give us anything... if you can't give us a clean place to live... well then swallow your gum like the rest of us.