

JOHN FROM BACK HOME: EPISODE 1, "THE PUMP ROOM"

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Friday, May 8. 3:42 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Uh, hi. This message is for Wes Davis. I'm not even sure if this is still a good number or not, it's been like... fifteen years or something. This is John Myers. From high school. From Clear Lake High School. Uh, yeah. I was just calling because... um, I heard from someone, uh, from Collin Gable that you were in town. He said he saw you at the Pump House last night, and um... yeah, I don't know, I was thinking maybe we could hang out while you're in town. I don't know how long you're gonna be here. It's been a long time. So... like I said, I don't know if this is still the right number. I haven't called it since high school, so... it feels like a fuckin-- freakin' time warp or something. Um, anyway, give me a call if you wanna hang out. I'm still at the same number. John Meyers. My mom's number. My mom's house. OK. Yeah. See you later. Talk to you later, maybe.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 1:28 A.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Wes! You piece of fucking shit. It's John. And, guess what, man? I went to the Pump Room tonight, and it definitely sounds like you were there last night. So that's cool. Thanks for the call, by the way. And I know this is definitely your old number, because it's still the same fucking greeting on the machine. I guess, just... what the fuck, man? You didn't wanna give me a call? Alright, fine. Fine. Fine! You fucking leave town to go be some big Hollywood dick, and it's just like... fuck everyone back home. And that sucks, man. That just sucks. It sucks that you haven't kept in touch. I don't know. Maybe I'm just... not worth remembering. It's fine. It's fine. Anyway. Hope you're having a great time. And you can go fuck yourself.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 12:15 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Hey, man. It's me again. John. Um, look I... I owe you an apology. Collin told me about your dad. Dude. I'm really sorry, man. Things have been kinda rough for me lately, and then I started drinking and just... jumped to conclusions. And I'm sorry. I just hope you're holding up OK. I don't know if you're still in town, or if you've already had the funeral. Um. If there's anything I can do, I'd love to help out. Any way. I don't know what that would be. But, I'm here. And if it's any consolation, I do know what you're going through. You know, my dad died a few years back and... well, I don't know if you do know that or not. I posted on Facebook when it happened, but I don't even think you're on there anymore. I mean, who is? But yeah, my dad passed away, so... I know what you're going through. So, I'm here to talk about it... or *not* talk about it. Whatever man. Just give me a call. Um, I'm around all day, so... again, I'm sorry about last night. OK. See ya.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 12:21 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Except, OK. The thing I said about you leaving town and just kinda forgetting the people you left behind. Forgetting me. I mean, that is kinda true. I'm sorry I called you a piece of shit. And I'm sorry I told you to go fuck yourself. And... oh and a dick, I'm sorry I called you a dick. But it was kind of dick move. You know? I don't know, it's not like I expected you to stay here just because I did. We all wanted to get the fuck out. I mean, who doesn't? If it had been me instead of you, I for sure would have. But, I feel like, if it was me, I still would have kept in touch with people. Y'know? I don't know. Maybe that's easy for me to say. But like... dude, you didn't even reach out when my dad died. That sucks, dude. I've really missed you. You were my only friend. It has really sucked living here without you.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 7:43 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

I was just thinking about Jeff Duffey. From high school. Remember him? He sat in front of me in Algebra. He'd bring an entire bag of cookies to class and stack 'em up into like a tower. And then he'd take a bite of one, put it on the other side of the desk. Take a bite of another, stack it on top of the first. He'd do that the whole way through the stack, and when he was done, he'd start over again. Take a bite, move it over to the other side. Fifteen, twenty minutes later, he'd eaten all of them. Every Tuesday and Thursday I watched him do this shit at like... ten-thirty in the morning. We weren't even supposed to eat in school. I think the teachers were too weirded out to call him on it.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 8:07 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Tamara Vargas ate the sheep eye we were supposed to dissect in biology. I still get fucking nauseous thinking about it. We all thought she was gonna get poisoning from like, formaldehyde or whatever. But she was fine. I honestly think they just got a big tray from a butcher shop in the morning and brought it into class.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 8:11 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

So, why do you think people thought we were weird? We didn't do anything like that. I don't know. Maybe it's just that we were quiet and smart and well-behaved. It's like the kid with the cookies. If you do something aggressively weird it establishes dominance. Otherwise it just makes you look weak.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 9:30 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Do you remember the band Camden? You burned me their CD junior year. We used to listen to it all the time in your Tacoma. Here, listen to this.

*SFX: Camden - "You Little Tiger"*

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 10:21 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Dude! OK, so. I was going through some old shit in the attic, and you'll never guess what I found. The fucking Minotaur, dude! You remember that? The comic we made senior year? Alright, I don't know if you, but... so, like, there was this evil, wizard guy who lived out in the woods, right? In the mountains. Except he wasn't, like, evil completely. He would give people a fair chance. He'd go into the village disguised as a beggar, and he would see how people treated him. And the people who were kind to him, or gave him money, or just ignored him or whatever, he didn't do anything to those people. Just let them go. But the people who mistreated him, who like kicked him, or mocked him, or stole from him, or whatever, he would find out where they lived. And then he would send them this letter, right? Like that they had won something, like money or a prize. Or, if they had like a long lost love he'd write pretending to be that person. I don't know how he knew all this stuff. We never... we never really established that. But you know, he's like a wizard, so it's just kind of assumed. Anyway, so he'd write to them and be like, oh yeah, I have this thing you want. You just have to come out to this castle in the woods on this mountain and get it. And these people would come, because it was all like stuff they really wanted. So, anyway, they'd get to the wizard's castle, and in order to get inside they'd have to go through this maze. And like, it didn't look like anything that bad on the outside, but on the inside it was all crazy and twisty, and they would fucking get lost immediately. And then, all of a sudden, they'd see something lurking around one of the corners of the maze. Just, like... standing there... and staring at them. And in the comic it was just, like, a shadow... but like... a shadow that's definitely standing on two legs. And has eyes. And so, the people from the village, they'd be like, fuck this, it's not worth it, and they'd try to go back. But they couldn't find their way back. And every time they'd turn a corner, they'd look behind them and that shadow would be getting closer and closer and closer. And so they start running, and now they're just getting more and more lost, and the shadow is getting closer and closer. Until finally. The Minotaur is upon them. With like, this fucking head of a bull and these awful horns that are all boney and bloody like they're exploded out of his fucking skull. And he's snorting, and there's like steam and snot coming out of his nostrils.

JOHN (cont'd)

And the Minotaur roars and the villagers scream. And then... well, I don't know, that's the end of the comic. I guess he eats them or something?

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 10:30 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

You remember we tried to sell these at school? We thought it was gonna be our big fucking break of our comic career. But we didn't even have a printer or anything, so we just made shitty xeroxes in the library and stapled them together. Tried to sell them to kids in the parking lot before and after school. Y'know, I take it back. I get why people thought we were weird. Still, pretty good for a couple of kids. Mine's not one of the shitty xeroxes, by the way. This is the O.G. The Minotaur. Written by Wes Davis, illustrated by John Myers. We made a really good team.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 11:02 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

You know what's weird about looking at this comic? I forgot whether or not I was any good at drawing. I haven't looked at any of that stuff in years. Haven't really drawn anything at all since you left, I think. I read this article once that says the more you remember something the worse the memory gets. Because you're not actually remembering the thing itself, you're just remembering the last time you remembered it. It's like that shitty xerox in the library. You copy something, then you copy the copy, and it just starts to look like one big blob. And every time I thought of my drawings, I'd think, 'eh, I wasn't that good anyway.' And so in my mind, they started to get worse and worse. And eventually, I just convinced myself I must have really, really sucked. So to be looking at these now is a real trip. I was really good! I'm not even sure why I stopped. It's the only thing I've ever actually been good at.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Saturday, May 9. 11:47 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Y'know, in the comic we never really say who the Minotaur is, or how he got into that maze. Like, does he live there or is he trapped? You know? Well... I mean, you wrote it. But. I don't think you do know. I think he was just a scary monster to you. But I wonder about him. I wonder how he thinks, how he feels. I wonder if he's not all that bad, y'know, he's just... looking for help. I feel like that some times. Like, I've tried to tell people I'm not OK... or that I'm lonely... or that something's wrong. But, I don't always know how to say it, and the words don't always come out the way I mean them too. And I think for some people that's scary? I can see it from the way they look at me. I mean... it's clear. And you can only go so long like that, begging people for help and getting nothing before it makes you so... fucking... mad. Like, do you not fucking see me? Can you not tell that I'm absolutely drowning? Why does no one ever reach out to me? Maybe that's the way it is for the Minotaur. He's just trying to ask for directions, y'know? Not his fault he's got like... a buffalo head. I think maybe it's easier for someone not to help you, when they assume you're just going to go on suffering in silence.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 12:10 A.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

It's been really good to talk to you, Wes. Or... whatever this is. It just feels nice to say some of this stuff that's been swimming around in my head for a while. I mean, really, since... since you left probably. It's like I've had all this shit building up, and I was just waiting for you to come back so I could just... let it all out. And now that you're back... I mean, I haven't even seen you yet, but... I don't know. It feels like old times. Anyway, I should probably go to bed. It's getting late. But, I really hope you call me back, man. Because I don't think we're done talking.

*SFX: BEEP*