

JOHN FROM BACK HOME: EPISODE 2, "NORMANDIE"

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 11:30 A.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Y'know, I just realized I haven't told you yet how proud of you I am. I mean, I know that sounds weird or whatever... but I am. You're like, my most successful creative friend. I mean. You're my only successful creative friend. But still, it's impressive. I brag about you to everyone I know, everyone I work with. I always tell people you grew up here, went to high school at Clear Lake, and all that shit, man. I always make sure to see your name in the credits of whatever you work on. You know how they like... fuckin try to skip the credits sometimes? I always hit that little button to keep them from skipping. Because fuck that, man. I wanna see my friend's name on TV. That's fucking awesome! You're really doing it, man. You went out there with a dream, and you're doing it. I mean... OK, I have noticed that in the credits above your name it still says "Assistant Writer." Which is kind of weird. I keep thinking you're gonna get promoted every time you write for a show. But, whatever. These things probably take time, right? Probably politics and shit involved. What do I know? Don't listen to me, I have no idea what I'm talking about. Whatever. Point is. I'm really proud of you.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 11:52 A.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Your whole life is like, so Hollywood dude. It rules. I don't know if you know this but you're like my favorite social media follow. I just love all the places you hang out, and the parties you go to, and the cool fucking people you get to hang out with. Living the dream, man. That's what's up, dude. You're not rotting away in some piece of shit town. Nah, you're out there in the sun and the palm trees. Hot girls. Movie premieres. Fuck! Must be so fucking sick, dude. Sometimes I check out the places you geotag, and look them up in Google and just kind of poke around. I like to do the street view thing. It's kinda cool. Just kinda like cruise down the street and imagine I'm you, walking around town, going to your next big meeting or whatever it is. Coffee in one hand, script in the other. I look at all the street signs, and it's like shit I've heard about in movies.

JOHN (cont'd)

Beverly Boulevard, Melrose Avenue, Sunset and Vine. You're probably sick of it by now, but trust me man, from the outside it looks really fucking cool.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 12:03 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Alright, so don't take this the wrong way or anything. But like, one time. You posted this picture in front of your apartment. With your girlfriend. Erin, right? Anyway, I could make out the numbers on the door. So, I mean, it didn't take much looking around to figure out what street you're on. Social media, man. It's fucking crazy. We're all just, like, giving them all this information about ourselves. And it's like, anybody can see that shit! And you know, there are some fucking messed up people out there. Like, I'm sure in L.A. There are some fucking messed up motherfuckers. Probably waiting for you to go on vacation or something, as soon as you post about it they're gonna come break in and steal your shit.

(a beat)

Anyway, so, I looked up your apartment building. And I looked up their website, and sometimes I check the new listings. Because how fucking cool would that be, if we were like neighbors? I could hook up my 64, and whenever you get off work you could come over and we could get high and play Turok, just like we did in high school, man. How fucking awesome would that be? I mean... I've seen the ads, so I know how much you fucking pay for apartments out there. It's nuts, dude. That's fucking crazy. It's not like I could afford it, so... it's not like I could even afford to get out there in the first place. But still. I do think about it. A lot.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

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

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

But those ads, man. Even the ads sound fucking glamorous. "Pre-war charm," "Original fixtures," "Third floor walk-up with roof access." I bet you feel like fucking... ah, fucking... I don't know, I don't know any screenwriters' names. But I bet you feel like one of those old guys.

JOHN (cont'd)

I can picture you sitting on top of the roof, with a typewriter and a cigarette. I imagine you've been up all night, and you're like putting the finishing touches on your latest masterpiece right as the sun comes up. And you hit that last key, and just watch as it illuminates the palm trees. That must be so rad.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 12:17 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

I googled your address. I guess the name for that neighborhood is East Hollywood. That sounds awesome. Probably, like, way cooler than Hollywood, right? I bet Hollywood's where all the posers live. But East Hollywood is probably like full of all the cool writers, and all the actors who are just getting their big starts. I bet you hang out, like, at all these fucking cool coffee shops, and pass scripts around, or whatever you guys do. You always had such good taste. East Hollywood, man. That's the shit.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 12:24 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Dude, I love the bars you go to. They always look so classy. There's one place I've noticed you tag yourself in a lot. The Normandie. That place is so cool, man. Big leather booths, candles on the tables, bartenders wearing vests. Nothing like the dives we have here. I bet you the Normandie doesn't smell like piss. I bet you could go to a bar like that and read a book. Eat a charcuterie plate. Classy as fuck. You know, I did see that you took your girlfriend Erin there for her birthday, with a bunch of friends. It looked like you guys were having a really good time. You had tagged some of the other people there, so I saw their pictures too. You guys looked great, man. Erin was wearing that pink bob wig and that sparkly dress. She looked, like, all 1920s, so cute. What do they call that? A flapper? And you had a goddamn tie on. Classy motherfucker. You guys really did it up, man. Like, you guys shut the place down. I saw this video on one of your friend's pages, of all you guys outside at the end of the night, like in some alley. Someone had a bottle, like you guys were keeping the party going. So fucking sick. You and me would have a good time together, dude. I can imagine the two of us doing it up at a place like that. Meeting up after work, having a few drinks. Just going off, closing that shit down.

JOHN (cont'd)

Drinking in the alley after the bar closed. Then heading back home for some Turok on 64. It always comes back to Turok, man, I'm telling you.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 12:28 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Although... okay, there was one video I noticed. Just kinda stuck out from the rest. You guys are all out in an alley, and someone -- I think one of Erin's friends -- was taking this video of some of the girls trying to do a dance or something. I think like an old music video dance from the 90s. I don't remember which one. Anyway, you can see you and Erin in the background, a ways down the alley. And you're talking, but it looks... a little heated. She's like, got her arms crossed in front of her chest. And you're making these jerky movements. You can't make out what you guys are saying but you can tell the vibe is just... bad. I hope this doesn't sound too creepy, like I'm stalking you or anything. But I notice this stuff, I can't help it. I'm always, like, people watching. And my brain can't help but put the pieces together... so I try to kinda make sense of what they're going through. Anyway, in the video, you take your jacket off and try to put it around her shoulders, but she just shrugs it off and turns away. Which seems like it causes another argument. And then there's another video, from the same person. More funny dancing and singing. And in the background, it looks like Erin is laying on the ground, with her legs straight up in the air. That pink wig is next to her. And, it looks like you're trying to like, help her up. Or, grab her arm or pull her up, or whatever. And she's just resisting, like dead weight. You try a few times, and then just... give up. The video ends, but right before it does you kinda turn and start to walk down the alley, away from her and the rest of her friends. And then there are more videos and pictures from that night, but you're not in any of them. Erin eventually gets up, and goes back to her friends, but she's really trashed. Like barely can keep her eyes open. And you're just... gone.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 12:35 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

I noticed after that night that Erin wasn't in any of your pictures or stories. And then, you deleted all the old pictures of you two together from your instagram grid.

JOHN (cont'd)

And I haven't really seen any pictures of you back at the Normandie since then. Looks like you're going to some new place now. Kind of a speakeasy? It looks kinda cool. But I don't know, I just miss seeing you at the Normandie. That place was perfect man, classy but not douchey. Just the right balance. I'm not saying the places you go now are douchey. But sometimes some of the people look kinda douchey. I don't know, they're definitely not the kinda places you could read a book at the bar. More like... places you do coke in the bathroom. And hey man, no judgement. You do you, that's cool. But all I'm saying it... you don't look as happy as you did at the Normandie. Sometimes you post these photos of you out at these bars, and I kinda wonder why you would want people to see a picture of you looking like that. I don't know... maybe you want people to see that you're unhappy? I get that. Maybe you're hoping someone will see those pictures and reach out to you. Listen, no pressure or anything, but like... I could be that person. I'm a really good listener. And like... I think maybe we're more alike than you realize. I know our lives are different now, but we come from the same place. And we've been through a lot of the same shit. I dunno, ignore me I guess. I just want you to be happy, man, that's all.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 2:22 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Dude. I just checked Erin's instagram for the first time in a while. Fuck, man. I'm sorry. I mean... I assume you know. It looks like she has a new fucking boyfriend, man. That fucking sucks, dude. *He* sucks. Look at this dipshit. He has a neck tattoo, dude. Like... what the fuck is that supposed to be? Is he supposed to be a badass or like... a poet. Like, pick one. Pick fucking one. I mean, come on. His instagram says he's like a *soos*-chef? What the fuck is a *soos*-chef? I can't even fucking say that. God, what the fuck? There must be so many fucking douchebags like this in L.A., right? I bet this guy doesn't live in fucking East Hollywood. He probably lives in one of those bullshit neighborhoods. Like, fuck. Fuck man, I'm sorry, I'll stop talking about him. It's not cool. I'm just pissed for you. Y'know? Fuck that. Fuck Erin. I'm gonna block her. Y'know, I'm gonna fucking block her. She doesn't follow me. But still. I'm gonna fucking block her. I got your back.

(a beat)

But... it is interesting... it does look like she never deleted any of the photos she has of you guys. What's that about? I dunno. Maybe you've still got a shot.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 4:08 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Hey man, uh... here's something kinda weird. I was just thinking about all those "assistant writer" credits, and wondering if maybe I just got it wrong and you did move up to regular writer. So I looked up your credits online and... well, it's weird. I definitely remember them saying "assistant writer," but now I'm looking and they actually say "writer's assistant." And I mean... I still don't know what the difference would be exactly. But, it just sounds worse somehow. I don't know. Anyway. It's weird that I'm just catching this now. Right?

*SFX: BEEP*