

JOHN FROM BACK HOME: EPISODE 3, "JOHN'S HOUSE"

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 10:15 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

I'm not sure if you follow me on, like, social media stuff. I don't really post a lot. But, I mean, some times. Some things. I think that there have been years that I wanted people to know about and years where I just... didn't want anyone to see me. Y'know? A lot of people don't like social media, and I get that. Most of it is trash. But I like that idea, that you can just... disappear. It's really comforting. I wish I could do that in real life, y'know? I wish I could just walk into the Pump Room and decide to be invisible for a night. But. Anyway. I guess, the point is, I don't think you know everything I've been up to since high school. And, I mean, we've got nothing but time now. Right?

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 10:19 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

For a while, things were really good for me. Like, right after high school. I mean, I don't know... I've never loved living here, I guess. But I don't always feel like I have an alternative. Like, there are good times living here and bad times. But, after high school, that first year. That was a good time, man. I was working in my dad's metal shop, and I was taking some classes here in town. Arrowhead Community College. I don't remember what I was majoring in. Communications, maybe? I don't know what I really wanted to do. But it was nice. There was purpose, and I felt like I had... I don't know what to call it. Opportunity, maybe? I remember taking an anthropology class. That was really cool. I mean, I wasn't going to be an anthropologist or anything. But, I kinda liked thinking about how people lived in other times. Thinking about how different they were, but kinda the same also. And how we forget about those people, gradually, over time. Whatever they thought was important, however they built their cultures and traditions and societies... all of that shit just goes away with time. So it's sort of like... what are we doing getting so upset over our own lives, you know? What's the point? No one's really gonna remember all that much.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 10:25 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

I had an apartment off campus, that I could afford with the money I was making in my dad's shop. It was pretty crappy, but it was my own. So that was nice for me. I had a girlfriend, too. Or like... I don't know if she was actually my girlfriend. But there was this girl, Caroline. And we would hang out together. It was nice. I don't know what happened to her... I actually haven't really thought about her in a while. I hope she's doing okay. We used to have these game nights. Really fun nights. She was all into these cool board games, and her friends would come over. We'd drink beer and play games all night. It was fucking cool, man. There was this one about like... a haunted house? I don't remember, I think maybe at one point if you rolled wrong you could fall through the floor or something? And I played that Camden album, the one you burned for me. It's funny, all that stuff is like, tied together in my brain. It's like those ancient societies we learned about in Anthropology class. That stuff felt really important at the time, but now I'm probably like the only person who remembers it. And when I die, it will just all... go away.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 11:02 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

All that changed when my dad got sick, though. First, he couldn't work as much, so I had to drop out of my classes to cover the shop. That lasted a few months. And then he got worse, like real fast. Which I guess, in some ways was... a blessing? I don't know. Because all of a sudden he was just gone. It's probably worse when you watch someone just fade away slowly. With my dad, it just happened so quickly it didn't even feel real. I didn't have time to process it. It just kinda like... was what it was. And once he was gone, I couldn't keep the shop open. None of the clients wanted to work with me, they all did business there because of my dad. I just I didn't have whatever it was that he had, the thing that makes people just... like you. So, we had to close the shop. And I moved back with my mom. I was really depressed. I guess we both were. I was drinking way too much. Caroline stopped calling me. Or, maybe I stopped calling her? Either way. It was for the best. She didn't deserve that.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 11:13 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Man, it was really hard being home with my mom after my dad died. She just... sort of... went away inside. She would sleep a lot. Watch TV sometimes. She wouldn't really eat very much. Everything happened so quickly with my dad, and I sort of didn't understand it, so it really felt like I was about to lose my mom too. Y'know? Like there was some kind of curse working it's way through my family members, ripping them up from the inside out. And, I didn't know how to stop it, but I knew that if I didn't do something I was gonna lose every person I loved. It felt like I was getting some sort of message, telling me I hadn't done anything with my life, telling me I had to.... I don't know what. Do something. Be a person. But, I didn't know what to do. So, I just started cleaning. Throwing out my dad's junk, tidying up the house, stuff like that. It was just what was in front of me, so I figured I'd just start there. And that's when I started finding the guns.

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MACHINE VOICE

Sunday, May 10. 11:24 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Like, my dad and I hunted deer growing up. I stopped when I was in high school, but like... I knew there were guns in the house. I knew where the locker was, and what the code was. But, when I started cleaning, I would find these other guns, man, like... everywhere. And not just hunting rifles either. I'd find old guns in the attic, that I thought were maybe my grandfather's or something. Then I'd find handguns on shelves in closets, or taped to the back of the night stand, or stashed in fucking... boxes of cereal. Seriously. And all of them were loaded. I didn't ask my mom about them, I didn't want to upset her or anything. But she had to have known they were there. It was like my dad was preparing for something. Like he was afraid of something that was coming for him. But dude, I swear to God, I have no idea what that would have been. He didn't have any enemies. As far as I could tell from the books, he was square with everyone at work. But I don't know... he must have really been fucking scared of something. I just collected every gun that I found and put them all in a steamer trunk in the attic. I didn't know what else to do.

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MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 12:17 A.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

After a while, there wasn't anything left to clean in the house. But it didn't really change anything for my mom. She was still pretty much catatonic. So, okay, cleaning wasn't the answer. Guess I'll try something else, right? It seemed like she needed to get out of the house. That's the only thing I could think to do. But like... I didn't really get out of the house either, so it's not like I knew where to go or anything. The only place I could think about was the Pump Room. And, man, she did not want to go. I practically had to carry her to the car. She was crying, begging me to just let her stay in bed. But I just fastened her seatbelt, got in the driver's seat, and started driving. I remember thinking that ten minute car ride might actually kill her. But I don't know. Something had to change. Anyway, we get to the bar... and, it's fine. She had one beer. I don't even think she drank the whole thing. We made small talk. Didn't talk about my dad at all. But, something did change after that. She started to get a little bit better. So, I kept taking her. Once a week, to the fucking Pump Room, this shitty dive bar. Me and mom. I don't remember when, but one of the times I said something and she laughed. Dude. That felt huge. That felt like I found it, whatever it was I was supposed to be doing. I knew I wasn't gonna lose her too.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 12:20 A.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

That was another one of those anthropology eras. Felt important at the time, but... didn't really mean shit.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 12:45 A.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Finally, my mom starts going to the Pump Room on her own. Which is fine by me, I mean at first it's great. She was actually doing something on her own. I'd go meet her there usually. It was fun. And that's where she met Dale. This fucking guy, Wes. I swear to god, a face made for punching. He's such a smug piece of shit. I just fucking hate Dale so much. But, y'know, the first few times it's great. She's enjoying herself, talking to people. She's back to being my mom again. And that's awesome. But then she and Dale start dating. And the same way my dad got sick and then he was just gone, all of a sudden they're getting married. And Dale fucking moves into my house. And he's like former military, fucking old-school macho prick, and he starts telling me what to do, telling me how to act, telling me how to talk to my mother. Like, motherfucker, I had to drag her out to the bar where she met your ass in the first place. But y'know, that doesn't mean shit to him. He only thinks about things with himself at the center. And he's telling me how I should go back to school and get a business degree, like that's something I would ever fucking do in my entire life. He's like, "No matter what you do, you want to be your own boss." And I'm like, no Dale, not really. But you know what sucks? I liked going to school, at least the way I was doing it. But I don't know... I don't think I can do it anymore. It's like I spent all this energy getting my mom back, and I didn't realize I wasn't gonna have anything left over for myself. I'm telling you, man, as much as I fucking hate this guy, I hate how much my mother loves him even more.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 1:03 A.M.

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JOHN

Dale owns a copy shop. Because, y'know, if you have the opportunity to be the boss of a bunch of xerox machines, you gotta take that shit, right? Anyway. Guess where I fucking work now. Yeah man, can't get enough Dale in my life. Gotta see his dumbass face day in and day out. Nothing like having your asshole boss follow you home every night to tell you you're setting the table wrong, or not taking the trash out quickly enough. I wanna get out so fucking bad, man. But, I don't know how. I feel trapped. And the worst part is it's my fucking house, you know? Like Dale's always threatening to kick me out. Which is hilarious. I've lived here all my life dude. Your ass just waltzed in.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 1:21 A.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

I guess I do have an advantage though. I am on my home court. Dale can act like he owns the place all he wants, but there's shit he doesn't know. And I guaran-fuckin-tee he doesn't know about the steamer trunk in the attic packed to the fucking brim with loaded guns. I mean, shit, maybe that's why my dad left them in the first place. Maybe he knew one day I'd have to protect myself against intruders.

SFX: BEEP