

JOHN FROM BACK HOME: EPISODE 4, "THE PARKING LOT"

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 11:07 A.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

I fucked up, dude. Real fucking bad. Last night, after I told you all that shit about my dad, and my mom. And Dale. I don't know, I guess I hadn't really laid it all out like that, you know? And I just never thought about how that shit is just... connected, and I was like, wow. Fuck. So, I went out for last call at Pump Room to have a last drink or two, clear my head. But, I just really wasn't ready to go back home. Like not right now, not at that moment. And I know the bartender who was on last night, Aaron. So he let me stay and have one more while he was closing up. But then, y'know, he had to go. He had to leave. Which I get. So, I drove to the gas station and picked up a twelve pack. I was just gonna head back and drink a few in my room and pass out, but when I got in the car and started driving over, I just.... I don't know man, I just couldn't fucking do it. I couldn't see myself falling asleep in that house. So, I just parked down the street. Played some music, drank a few beers... and I woke up in my car, about 10 in the fucking morning, dude. Which is a real fucking problem, because I was supposed to open Dale's shitty little copy store at 8 o'clock. So, yeah, um, I'm a little fucked. When I get there, he was not thrilled about it. At all. I pulled up and he was just standing outside with his arms folded across his chest. He'd probably been waiting there for me since fucking 8:01. Or even like... 7:59. And he's like, "John. What do you have to say for yourself?" Like he wanted me to start groveling and begging and kissing his fucking feet or whatever. And at that moment, I thought. I'm done. So I looked him in the eye and said, Dale, I got shitfaced last night and fell asleep in my car about a block down the road from our house. And I kid you not, dude, the guy's face got fuckin' beat red. Like, actually tomato red, like a Loony Tunes cartoon. And he starts screaming at me, and getting in my face, and telling me what a stupid, lazy piece of shit I am. And yeah, he fired me. Which, honestly? Yeah, I get it. Because, you know, I fucking hated that job. So, it's really fine. That's fine, I'll figure it out. But that just made him even madder, right, because I think he thought I'd like fall to my knees and beg him to please change his mind. And at that point, I'm done arguing with Dale, so I just turn and head back to the car. And he's like, "If you're not gonna turn around and face me like a man, then you can drive straight home, pack up your shit and get out." So. Fuck it. That's what I'm doing right now. And honestly, I really don't care about any of it. The fuckup is, I don't have anywhere to go.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 1:32 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

So I went home to pack up all my shit, and I realized: I don't have anything. I mean, there's stuff, but nothing I really like, need. Or want. Not if I'm getting kicked out of my childhood home. I grabbed some random clothes, some Gatorade, and then I went up to the attic and grabbed as many guns as I could find and shoved them into my old JanSport bag. I don't know, maybe I can sell them? Where exactly do you sell guns? A pawn shop? I dunno. Craig's List? Oh, and I still have like 18 beers leftover from last night in my car. So that's a plus. Old Dale was paying me exactly minimum wage at the copy shop, so it's not like I have a lot of savings to hold me over. Five hundred bucks or so, I'd guess. I need to be like really careful about how much I spend right now. Which is a fucking bitch because I don't have anywhere to stay and a hotel would really fucking eat into my savings. I guess I'll make some calls and figure out what my options are.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 2:46 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

My options are fucking bullshit. I mean, I guess I fucking knew that, it's why I lived with my mom and her dipshit husband in the first place. I just don't know a lot of people in this town, to be honest. Most people left after high school, and I'm not really close to anyone who stuck around. I tried Collin Gable, but I guess he's living with his girlfriend now and he doesn't think she'd be cool with me crashing. So, I dunno. Let's be honest, that dude fucking sucks. There's that guy at the Pump Room, Aaron, he might have a lead for me. They open at four, so I guess I'm heading back there now.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 7:31 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Alright. So, the bad news is, Aaron didn't have a place for me to stay. He and his brother live in an apartment off of Rialto, and I guess their cousin is crashing on their couch. So, yeah. That makes me... fuckin... homeless. I mean, at least for a night. Or maybe, a while? I don't know. Dude, I don't know what I'm gonna do. I guess I didn't really think that far ahead. I could probably go back home, give Dale what he wants. Tell him I'm sorry, that I'll be a better xeroxer, whatever. A better son. Maybe I can tell him I'll start taking business classes at Arrowhead. Shit, if I really gritted my teeth, I could probably save up enough to move out, get my own place, get a different job. Build up a resume. But, y'know, honestly? Fuck him. I'd rather be homeless.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 7:33 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Oh shit, I forgot to tell you the good news. So, after Aaron told me I couldn't crash I figured, you know, what the hell, I might as well hang out and have a few drinks. Aaron felt bad for me, so he was comping most of them. Until his fucking prick manager showed up and called him out for it. He told me I had to start paying for my drinks or get out. Fucking asshole. Like, how much money have I spent at that shit hole since high school? Jesus fucking Christ, it's like everything I do is for someone else. You'd think that would earn me, like, the benefit of the fucking doubt. But I guess that's a good lesson. Like, why fucking try?

(a beat)

But the good news is, when he wasn't looking I swiped a bottle of bourbon from behind the bar. So, wherever I end up tonight, I'm not going thirsty.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

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

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Alright, so, here's the update. It's not perfect, but I've got a spot for tonight. I don't know if it's all this talking to you and remembering the old days or what, but I thought to myself, you know what's probably empty right now?

JOHN (cont'd)

The parking lot at our old high school. So dude, I kid you not, I'm parked outside of Clear Lake, just chilling with a bottle of bourbon. It looks a lot smaller than I remember. The school. Not the bourbon. Do you remember in the courtyard there was, like, that mosaic American flag. And you weren't supposed to walk on it, even though it was in the middle of the fucking walkway, because it was like... disrespectful to the troops? Well, nobody around now. I could probably walk all over that shit. It's pretty peaceful. Not that I'm planning to live out of my car for that long, but honestly, dude, you could do worse. At least there's nobody around to give me shit. Just you and me, bud. Oh shit, hey, check this out.

SFX: Camden - "You Little Tiger"

JOHN

You know I had to bring that Camden CD with me. Dude, it's so wild listening to it, here, lemme tell you. I think we were probably in this exact parking lot the first time you played it for me. Full circle, motherfucker.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 9:45 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Do you remember Junior year when you asked Sandy Hogan to homecoming and she said no? And then you and me after school were hanging out in the parking lot and tossing that tennis ball back and forth, and I threw it too hard and it went under that truck, and you had to crawl under to get it? And then Sandy Hogan walked up because it was her truck and it looked like you were like... cutting her brakes or something? Dude, that was fucking hilarious.

SFX: BEEP

MACHINE VOICE

Monday, May 11. 10:31 P.M.

SFX: BEEP

JOHN

Oh fuck, Wes. Dude. My heart is fucking racing. OK, um, lemme back up. Alright. So. I had to piss, right? So I got out of the car, and I start looking around. I went up to the school just to check if a door was open and maybe I could go inside and find a bathroom.

JOHN (cont'd)

But, obviously it was locked. So I'm like, OK, if I just find a bush or a tree or something I'll be alright. So I just start walking over to the kinda forest-y area past the courtyard where we used to eat lunch. Right? And then, I see it. That fucking American flag mosaic tile thing on the ground. And, dude, it's fucking pristine. They must still be telling kids not to walk on it. Even though the rest of the school looks like it's gonna fall apart any second. And, I dunno, it just hit me how fucking stupid that is. How stupid everything is. It's like Dale, right? Stupid. People have these rules that they make other people follow, because it gives them some sense of power. These teachers, right? They knew we weren't listening to them. They knew they were failing us. But they're not gonna work any harder. They're not actually try and reach anyone, they're not gonna try to change anything. But there's this big dumb American flag on the ground, right where everyone walks. And they know that if they can keep us from walking on it, it means they still have some kind of control over us. Well fuck that, man. I'm done letting other people have that kinds control over me. I'm done giving up that part of myself. If they want it, they can come fucking take it. So I walked over to that American flag, whipped it out, and pissed all over it. And dude, it was fucking amazing. Dude, you would have cracked up, you would have cracked the fuck up if you had been here. And I *really* had to take a piss, so it was like... double whammy. Anyway, I finish. I zip up. I'm feeling pretty good about myself. So I walk back to my car and get in the driver's seat, and all of a sudden this bright ass light hits me right in the fucking eyes. At first I thought maybe I had tripped a motion sensor or something, because it was just like this light, no movement, no voice. But after a second I realized it was coming closer. And then I see like this... rent-a-cop security dude that the school must hire to watch the place at night. And I start to freak out a little, because like... did he see me piss on the flag? And then I'm like, oh fuck, can't you get on like the sex offender list for doing that? So I take a deep breath and I figure, alright John... play it cool. He's not a real cop. You got this. So, he taps on my window, and I roll it down. And he starts asking who I am, what I'm doing here. And I tried to come up with some lame ass excuse, that I'm meeting a buddy here, that it's just the most convenient point between our houses. But he's not fucking buying it. And he starts looking around the car with his flashlight. Looking in the back seat. Where this a big fucking JanSport backpack filled with a bunch of guns that I don't have permits for. And I'm like really fucking sweating, because I'm fucked. But that's when I notice something. I look at the guy's belt. He doesn't have a gun. And I've got this whole backpack full. And he doesn't have anything. Just a flashlight and a radio. If he wants to do anything, he's gonna have to call a real cop. How much time would that take? Enough time for me to reach back, grab one of my guns and get a shot off? Could I do that? In my head I'm like mentally calculating the time it would take. If I hit it just right, I might be able to do it all in one swift motion. But that's when, boom, he turns the flashlight off. And he tells me, he's gonna let me off with a warning, I just have to get out of the parking lot. And then he walks away.

SFX: BEEP

