

JOHN FROM BACK HOME: EPISODE 6, "THE ATTIC"

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Tuesday, May 12. 1:15 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Good morning, Wes. Or... shit. What time is it? 1 o'clock in the afternoon? Fuck me. Oh fuck, um... well. The crying finally stopped around 6 A.M. It still took me an hour or so to fall asleep after that. I never did figure out where it came from. Just like... surround sound. Which is fucking great. I'm not gonna lie, I was pretty freaked out at first. Not even because of like... ghosts or anything, but just the fact that I didn't know what the hell it was, I couldn't figure out where it was coming from. And it was like the fact that I couldn't figure it out... the fact that it just didn't make any sense... that's what was really getting to me. It was like, either there was something completely unexplainable happening, or else I was losing my mind. Either way. Bad fucking deal. But, after a while, it kept happening, and I guess I started to sort of... accept it? Like, as much as it shouldn't have been happening, it was. And, I started to get less freaked out and more... pissed off, honestly. It was just so fucking annoying. Especially because I wanted to sleep and my buzz was starting to wear off, but I couldn't not hear that sound. And then it finally stopped. Just around the time the sun came up. Oh, fuck, yeah, and the attic. I almost completely forgot. I went up there to look around, and nothing. I could still hear it in the walls, but there didn't seem to be anything like a crawl space, or a hollow part that someone could have been hiding in. So like, in that sense it was a bust. But, I did find something pretty interesting up there. Hold on though. I'm gonna see if your dad has any coffee.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Tuesday, May 12. 1:33 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

No coffee, no whiskey... Wes, I'm starting to think I picked the wrong house to squat in. At least there's Turok. And more RC cola than I could probably ever drink for the rest of my life. And, there's also this. The thing I'm staring at right now. The thing I found in your attic last night, and brought down and put on your bedroom desk.

JOHN (cont'd)

It's a cardboard box, like the kind people pack their stuff in when they get fired in movies, and it is filled with journals and notebooks. And each of these journals and notebooks is filled with writing, handwritten by someone, I'm guessing your dad. And dude, Wes... this is some really weird stuff. Like, the crying in the walls was one thing, but... I'm getting a chill now, and it's the middle of the afternoon, broad fucking daylight. I actually haven't even read very much of it, to tell you the truth. I started last night, but with the crying and all... it was just too much. But, now I'm gonna sit down and start taking a look. I mean, it's weird as fuck dude, but so is the crying in the walls. So maybe there's something in here that explains that. But I don't know if I can do another night here if that shit happens again. I might just take my chances with the rent-a-cop in the school parking lot, y'know? OK, well. Here I go. Wish me luck, Wes.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Tuesday, May 12. 2:25 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

So, the first batch of what I went through seems to be some sort of like... architectural plans? Like, y'know, blueprints or whatever? But, I can't really tell what they're supposed to be for. Like, maybe an extra room or something? Or maybe, like a remodel of one of the rooms in the house? But, I'm having trouble making sense of that for a couple reasons. The first being that this place is like completely unchanged from when I was here last. Like I said... it's like a time capsule in here. But, I don't know, maybe your dad was planning on doing some renovations once he retired. Maybe he would have already done them, but he didn't have any money because he was sending all of it to his son so he could live in some fucking East Hollywood bungalow. I don't know. Anyway, uh... but, the other reason I'm having trouble figuring this out is that these plans aren't, like, written in any unit I've ever seen before. They're not square feet, or meters, or anything like that. For one thing, these numbers are too big. This one says like... 20,874 by 63,872... by 285,673? But I don't even recognize the symbol next to the numbers... it's not even a letter. So, I honestly have no fucking clue what was going on here. But there are like... pages and pages of these. At first they just look like rooms, or big boxes. And then there are pages that have like... I think stairs? Going down, somewhere, I don't know. And then there are just... whole pages of stairs. Like. I don't know, rooms full of stairs? Um. And then, believe it or not, it gets weirder. Because it stops being boxes and starts to be like... circles. And still with weird dimensions and the symbols that I don't recognize. So, maybe they're not blueprints at all. Maybe it's just art or... something? Something else? Maybe I'm just thinking blueprints because they're the closest thing my brain can really recognize and I'm like... trying to form a link? I don't know. Um.

JOHN (cont'd)

But, it looks like there's some journals in here, so maybe I can read those and get a better idea of what was going on. Ah... yeah. So. I'll let you know what I find.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Tuesday, May 12. 3:42 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

When I was fourteen we had to move my grandmother out of her house and into this like assisted living place. An old folks home, basically. But, it was nice. Like a little cottage. And she had it all to herself, she could go to the main building for meals and to play cards or whatever else, and then come back to the cottage and have her space. Which was good for her, because she was like this super stubborn and independent woman. She probably never played cards once in that building. She called it, "the big house," like it was a jail. But, she was in her 80s at this point, and she had a couple falls, and my parents were worried about her living alone. So, while my parents were in the office getting her set up, I was taking boxes out of my dad's truck and moving them into my grandmother's new place. And when I walk into the living room, and I find her backed into a corner, like, literally. And she looks terrified. And I walk in and she looks up at me, like... like an intruder. And she looks me right in the eyes and says, "who are you?" I'm like, OK. It's been a long day. Things have been hectic. Moving is hard, she's old. So I just say, as calmly as I can, "It's me grandma. It's John." And I can tell immediately that this means nothing to her. There is absolutely no trace of recognition in her eyes. And then she says, "Where is my husband?" Which just completely threw me, because my grandfather had been dead for like twenty years at this point, way before I was even born. So, at that moment I knew, nothing about this was registering for her. She isn't here right now, wherever she is, it's... far, far away. So, I just set the box down, and walked out of the house. I went back to my dad's truck, and I sat there, and I waited for my parents to come back. I made myself look busy outside, so I didn't have to go back in. I don't know what happened. But, by the end of the day, she was fine. A little frazzled, maybe a little tired. But, she was back. I had never seen her show any signs of dementia before. They started coming more frequently after that. But it was really terrifying to see how quickly someone could just... drop out. Not recognize their surroundings, their family, their own mind. It happens really fast, faster than you expect.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Tuesday, May 12. 3:55 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

Alright, um, it definitely seems now like those are supposed to be blueprints. Because this journal is all about your dad documenting the process of building something. I'm still not sure what. It starts out just kind of like, a record of events. Or like, of ideas. Um, on this page it says, "It must be deep. Deep enough for no light to find it. Any light would destroy the intended effect, it would render the punishment void of its meaning." Uh yeah. There's a lot of that. Talk about "the punishment." I'm not exactly sure what to make of it all. Then he starts to talk about someone else, you, I think. I'm pretty sure. He doesn't name you, but... uh, let's see, he says, "it isn't his fault. I know he must suffer, but I wish I could take that place from him. His suffering belongs to me. I am the one who failed him. Why should the son suffer the sins of the father? He cannot know what is right and wrong if I never properly taught him. I just want him to live his life. I just want him to be happy. Not happy. Blissfully unaware. I thought I could protect him from this. I thought I could shield him. A father is meant to suffer for his children. A father should want to see his children grow up in a better world, should want his children to have the things he never had. I don't care about the money. I would gladly give everything of myself if it meant keeping him safe. I would gladly go the rest of my life without ever seeing him again if I knew it meant he would stay far away from this place. I have tried to take the punishment myself, but they will not let me. But I won't be deterred. I won't give up. I will do everything in my power to suffer this punishment, to make it my own. It is the least I can do. It is the only thing I can do." Uh... fuck me, dude. Jesus.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Tuesday, May 12. 4:08 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

So, after a whole bunch of that kind of stuff, there's a part where it seems like he was writing to someone else? I don't really know how to explain it. It's like reading one side of a conversation. The other person's side isn't written down, but your dad just kept responding to someone. Like he was having a conversation. Let's see. He says, "Why him? Why my son? He is not guilty. No one is born guilty. Yes, I know. I know. I know he did, but that hardly seems worth punishment. Aren't I the one who suffers the most from his actions? I'm the one who continues to support him. I should be the one to decide the punishment. And I say he's innocent. Yes, I know. No, I don't. I don't want that. You misunderstand me. I don't mean to offend you. I just want to understand why. Yes, I can see that. No, I don't think that. I just wish you would try. You've trusted me with so much, why not trust me with this? Alright, what if I refuse?"

JOHN (cont'd)

What if I make sure he stays far away from here, and never comes home? What if I kill myself before it's finished? No. No. Please. Yes, I understand. Will you at least let me be here when he comes? Maybe if he sees me, he won't be so afraid? Please, just give me that. Please. I'm begging you. Just give me that." And, uh, that's the end of the journal.

*SFX: BEEP*

MACHINE VOICE

Tuesday, May 12. 6:13 P.M.

*SFX: BEEP*

JOHN

OK, um... I found something. It's, uh, like... so I actually went back to those blueprints, because I couldn't stop thinking about them. And I tried as hard as I could to stop focusing on the stuff that was tripping me up... the numbers... the weird symbols. I decided to try to focus on other stuff, the stuff that made sense, and see if I could wrap my head around any of this. And once I did this, I noticed that he mentions mirrors a few times throughout the plans. And like... something behind a mirror. So I thought, OK, I'll check out the mirrors. Maybe there's something there, maybe some kind of clue. Um, and right now I'm standing in front of the bathroom mirror, the guest bathroom in the hallway. And at first, I didn't notice anything weird about it. And I was about to move on to the next one when I looked down and I noticed, the hairs on my arm are kind of standing up and moving, like there's a breeze blowing on them. But, I'm in front of the mirror, which is attached to the wall. So like, where's the breeze coming from? Right? But when I put my hand up against the edges of the mirror... there's definitely like a cold breeze coming from behind it. Alright, so, what I'm gonna do now, is try to take off the mirror and see if there's anything behind it. OK. Here goes.

*SFX: Phone being set down, grunting, mirror moving.*

JOHN

(slightly distant)

What the fuck? What the fuck is that?

*SFX: Phone being picked up.*

JOHN

OK, so, there's a big hole in the wall behind the mirror. And I'm trying to see what's inside the hole, but it's like... fucking pitch black. Let me see if I can turn on the flashlight on my phone and check it out. Whoa... there's like. A whole room in here. Like, a secret room. In the wall. It looks like it's empty. It's hard to tell, it's so fucking dark. It's freezing.

JOHN (cont'd)

(sigh)

Alright, I think I have to go into this fucking thing. Goddammit, Wes.

*SFX: BEEP*